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MŌRĀN 'ETHŌ

28

THE CHRISTIAN MINORITIES IN TURKEY

by

DDr. WILHELM BAUM



ST. EPHREM ECUMENICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE (SEERI)
BAKER HILL, KOTTAYAM - 686 001
INDIA

2006

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DDr. Wilhelm Baum



St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute (SEERI)
Baker Hill, Kottayam 686 001, Kerala, India

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The Christian Minorities in Turkey

By: **DDr. Wilhelm Baum**

(Deutenhofenstr. 26 A 9020 Klagenfurt, Austria)

E. Mail: wilhelm.baum@aon.at

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

On many journeys through Turkey, Armenia and Georgia I have been able to speak with a number of personalities from the sphere of the Eastern Churches, from the ecumenical patriarchs Dimitrios I and Bartholomaios to the bishops of Mardin and Turabdin and the Syrian Orthodox parish priest of Diyarbakir. I wish to express my special thanks to them all for the information provided. I am particularly indebted to my friend Professor Doktor Gregorios Larentzakis (Graz), under whose guidance I studied Orthodox theology and who made me aware of the polycentric development of Christianity. To Professor Doktor Hans Hollerweger I owe - in addition to diverse photographs - a study tour to the Turabdin, where I was able to stay at the monasteries of Deir al-Zafaran and Mor Gabriel and take part in monastic life there. Frau Doktor Tessa Hoffmann (Berlin) provided access to important photographs of the Armenian massacres of 1915, those of Armin T. Wegner among them. P. Narses from the Mechitarist monastery provided picture documentary; so did the Armenian archbishop Mesrop Krikorian (Vienna), to whom I wish to express my special thanks for the permission to print the pictures from the treasure of the Catholicosate of Edschmiazin. I am grateful to Jakob Thekeparambil (Kottayam/Kerala) for including this book's English translation by Ludwig Roman Fleischer (Vienna) in his series of

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Klagenfurt

Wilhelm Baum

Jan 2006

Preface

The forthcoming negotiations between the European Union and Turkey on a full membership of the country that, for the most part, does not belong to Europe are reason enough for a historical reflection on the difficult relationship between the only Muslim country with a laical constitution and Europe. Turkey was born through the destruction of the Byzantine and Armenian cultural worlds, which have always belonged to Europe and to the cultural sphere historically shaped by Christianity. For years I have been travelling through Turkey and have spoken to numerous members of the Christian minorities, from the Patriarchs Dimitrios I and Bartholomaios I to bishops, abbots and single priests and believers. Again and again, the question has turned up whether Turkey is fit to be received into the occidental cultural community, which is historically shaped by Christianity and based on the values achieved in the period of enlightenment: democracy, freedom of speech, tolerance and adherence to legal norms and international law.

The subject of this book is a critical historical consideration of a hitherto unsettled, bloody history of battle, enslavement, abduction and deportation. In European history, too, there have been religious suppressions, massacres and the Holocaust. In Europe, however, these burdens from the past are critically reflected on by numerous institutions and a critical historiography. There is no lack of re-evaluations, as e.g. carried out by the Catholic Church in the Second Vatican Council and by Christians in a still insufficient ecumenical dialogue, or expressed in Declarations toward Judaism made on diverse sides.

This book is no comprehensive history of Christianity in Turkey; many sources have been lost, are not accessible to research or have not been translated into western languages. It has, therefore, been impossible to completely represent the sorrowful relations of the past; it must suffice to get some insight into unsettled chapters of prosecution and genocide, which all persons involved in the European process of unification should be made aware of. The idea is to evoke a reflection on how the past is to be treated in a future Europe and which sectors still rest to be analysed.

The annihilation of Christianity in Asia Minor by the Turks was - among other things - possible, because Christians were at variance among themselves and Catholic, Armenian, Orthodox and Syrian Christians pursued their own interests and occasionally were ready to cooperate with the Muslims against other Christians. Some Turkish politicians were indeed ready to face the past, like Damad Ferid Pa-sha, who ordered the first war crime trials in Turkey in 1919. The national hero Kemal Pasha Atatürk, too, deserves to become the subject of critical investigation; despite his authoritarian policy he founded the first secular Muslim state - but at what cost? Turkey, too, must see the annihilation of the autochthon Christian population of Asia Minor as a tremendous loss. The European countries should never forget that Christian Byzantium as the "New Rome", Armenia and Georgia have always belonged to their cultural sphere and that Europe also lives on their cultural heritage.

This book is, therefore, meant to give impulses and to point out questions that have not yet been sufficiently answered, in order to better get to know the partner that wants to join the European society of values, to which he has not belonged until now.

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Wilhelm Baum

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The Christian Minorities in Turkey

1. The Muslim Conquest of Asia Minor (636-1461)

Only a few years after the victorious campaign of the emperor Herakleios (610-641) against the Persians, the Arabs from 634 onward were invading Asia Minor, the territory of present-day Turkey. They at first conquered the upper regions on the Euphrates and Tigris, which make up the far east of Turkey. After the victory of the Arabs over the Byzantines on the Yarmuk (August 20th, 636), Syria with its capital Antiochia fell to the Arabs, in 638 also Palestine with Syria, in 639/40 Mesopotamia and Armenia, and in 642 Egypt. Until the death of Herakleios the Byzantines lost almost two thirds of their territory; only along the Taurus line in the Kilikian Mountains the advance of the Arabs could be halted. Byzantium now covered but the mainland of Asia Minor, present-day Greece and parts of Italy and had to restrict itself to repulsing further attacks.

On considering the reasons of the Muslim expansion into Christian territory in the first century of Islam, the military strength of the fast advancing Arab armies is not a sufficient explanation. Especially the schism of eastern Christians rendered a compact defence front impossible. The Byzantine Empire considered itself as a Christian

realm with Orthodox state religion; as late as in 1054 the Byzantine imperial church finally separated itself from papacy and the Latin west ("Catholicism"). By way of "Caesaropapism" the emperor ("Basileus") also ruled over the imperial church; the Patriarch of Constantinople never gained the importance of the Roman pope. As early as from the beginning of the neo-Persian empire of the Sassanids in the third century the "Apostolic Church of the East" (the so-called Nestorian church) was establishing itself as an independent power on Persian territory with a "Catholicos" in the imperial capital Ktesiphon. Neither the pope in Rome nor the emperor in Constantinople was able to exercise any influence on this church. Problems built up when frontiers were changed during the many wars between Byzantium and Persia; then Byzantine Christians came under Persian rule and Persian Christians under Byzantine rule. In such situations the victors naturally always tried to join the newly won subjects to the own imperial church. Thus Chosrau II of Persia from 609 onward appointed "Nestorian" bishops in the Byzantine territories, who were – of course – expelled after the Byzantine counter-attack in 628. This pattern was to repeat itself often.

A new situation emerged when the nature of Christ was newly defined at the council of Chalcedony in 451 in Greek terminology, which met with sharp disapproval in the Syrian, Armenian and Coptic speech areas. In the course of the 5th and 6th centuries – despite all attempts at unification and suppression through the Byzantine side – the so-called "monophysitic" churches developed into powerful organisations that partly worked in the underground and have been able to assert themselves up to the present day. The use of the Greek language strongly declined in these areas. The dogmatic struggles

– on the one hand often nothing but quarrelling about words and definitions, but on the other casting some light on different mentalities – cannot be discussed here. In spite of occasional phases of tolerance and the readiness for unification talks, the antagonism between the "Chalkedonians" (as the "Monophysites" called the members of the imperial church) and the Syrian, Armenian and Coptic Christians deepened more and more. To the present day there has been little change in basic attitudes despite all ecumenical endeavours. Occasionally, confessional hatred has even caused the "Monophysites" to consider the conquest of a region by Arabs and Turks as "liberation", until they were all too often taught a different lesson in practice. The phase of Islamic tolerance always lasted only as long as a small Arab upper class ruled an area with a Christian majority. As soon as Islam had got the upper hand, the situation of the Christian minorities quickly changed: in most regions they were made to vanish completely, through massacres, suppression and prejudice in the legal system.

Within the Muslim orbit of power there were also "orthodox" Christians who adhered to the imperial church, the Greek language and culture. These Christians were called "Melkites" by the Muslims and suppressed in many ways. Among the patriarchal seats of the "Pentarchy" (Rome, Constantinople, Antiochia, Alexandria and Jerusalem) the "Melkite" Patriarch of Jerusalem always stayed in contact with Constantinople. To the present day there are more Melkite Christians than "monophysitic" ones in Syria. The "monophysitic" church of Syria was also called "Jacobite" after its first organiser Jacob Bardaios. While the terms "Nestorian" or "monophysitic" were considered derogatory by the people concerned and should therefore be avoided, the

Syrians called themselves "Jacobites"; today they somewhat misleadingly refer to themselves as the "Orthodox Church of Syria" in the tradition of the patriarch of Antiochia.

When in 969 Byzantium reconquered Antiochia (today Antkya) from the Arabs, it became a bastion of the Byzantine imperial church again. Although the "Jacobite" patriarchs of Antiochia have borne that name up to the present, they as a rule could hardly stay in Antiochia and resided in monasteries. The "Catholicoi" of the "Apostolic Church of the East" also saw themselves as successors in the tradition of Antiochia. Up to the present the Roman papacy has by way of so-called "unions" repeatedly tried to tie parts of the "Jacobites", "Orthodox", "Nestorians", Armenians and Copts to it, which resulted in further splits. The issue of the "unified" has been a source of irritation between the old oriental churches and Rome to the present day. Islam alone has benefited from these splits. In Egypt, too, an orthodox patriarchate with only few followers (like the Coptic one in Cairo) regards itself as the legal successor of the "Patriarchate of Alexandria". For a further consideration of the Christian minorities in Turkey the Syrian-Jacobite Church is therefore - apart from the Greek-Orthodox Church under the patriarchate of Istanbul and the Armenian Church - of major importance; these three churches have shaped Christian Asia Minor from late Antiquity to the present. In the eastern parts of Turkey the Kurdish and Arab languages predominate, e.g. in Mardin, which over centuries was the seat of the Syrian-Jacobite patriarch. The Melkitian church, too, has nowadays largely adopted the Arab language.

The first wave of Arab conquests from 636 onward still left the demographic structures widely untouched. For centuries to come, Orthodox Greeks predominated

in the west, on the Ionian coast and in Pontus, whereas the Syrian-Jacobite Church had its stronghold in the upper area on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers around the centres Amide (today Diyarbakir) and Edessa (today Sanli-Urfa) and in the eastern mountain regions, where a large number of Syrian monasteries was located. The Armenians at first primarily settled in the east around Lake Van and in present-day Armenia, but later more and more in the Taurus Mountains, where the "Minor Armenian Empire" would come into being, as well as in the imperial capital Constantinople and north of the Black Sea.

2. The Dhimmi System and the Djeehad

Among the most essential differences between Islam and other religions is the problem that Islam has never acknowledged the idea of a peaceful coexistence with other denominations and that the immensely important Western concept of a secular state with the separation of "throne and altar" or "church and state" or else tolerance toward other religions is completely alien to it. According to the Koran (Surah 2,62 and 105, as well as 5,68-69) the Christians – like the Jews – belong to the "peoples of the book" ("ahl al-ki-tab"). It is true that they are granted freedom and property, but several duties and restrictions are imposed on them. Thus, "Omar's Accord" of Khalif Omar II (717-720) contains the regulation that Christians are not allowed to erect or renovate churches and monasteries (art. 1 and 2), that their testimony is invalid at court (art. 8), that they are not permitted to wear the same garments as Muslims (art. 11), and are forbidden to ride saddled horses and carry arms (art. 13). This "accord" served as a pattern in later times, too.

The term "Dhimmi" denotes the contractual relations (Dhimma) of religions with the Islamic state under Islamic

rule. The area ruled by Islam is the "Dar al-Islam", the "house of Islam"; the rest of the world is the "Dar del-Harb", the "house of war", which has to be subdued. An armistice ("Hudna") is only possible temporarily and for tactical reasons; according to surah 9,29 of the Koran Christians, Jews and other scripture owners are the "unbelievers" one has to fight until they pay "protective money", the Jeezya. This also explains the quick spreading of Islam, as the members were on principle tax-exempt and lived on the loot and the Jeezya. The system worked until Islamic expansion came to a standstill in the middle of the 8th century.

Did the Dhimmi system mean protection or suppression? At first, Arabs were just a small minority in the areas conquered, compelled to come to some sort of arrangement with the majority of Christians or Zarathustrians. The caliphate of the Umayyads of Damascus (661-750) was widely pragmatic toward the Christian majority populations, so that e.g. the Jacobites at first were quite happy to have got rid of Byzantine suppression. In the beginning one could not foresee that all would end in the complete annihilation of the Christian cultures. Tax exemption naturally favoured the conversion of opportunists. It was, however, strictly forbidden to return to Christianity; until the 20th century renegades were facing capital punishment under Islamic law.

Legal discrimination against non-Muslims secured Islam's supremacy – even if it was in the minority! In the time of the Abbasids of Damascus (749-1258) the screws were gradually tightened against the Christians: Restrictions from the time of the conquests were intensified. Not all churches were destroyed though, but it was forbidden to build new ones – a regulation in force in Turkey up to the year 2005! Such regulations

could occasionally be circumvented through bribery; indeed churches were built even after the conquest, but the fundamental inequality between Muslims and Christians was never infringed upon. Christians had to wear special garments by which they could be recognized in the streets; hence the term "belt Christians". They were not allowed to ride horses, but only donkeys; their houses were not permitted to be higher than those of Muslims etc. Thus the number of Christians gradually declined and the language of the conquerors was adopted. From 685 onward the use of the Greek language was forbidden in Egyptian offices. In 693 Caliph Abd-al-Malik ruled that records had to be bilingual. After a few decades, however, the Christians, too, used the language of the ruling class.

The decline of the Christian denominations increasingly led to their isolation. At first the new lords made their marks in the cities, while rural areas continued to be shaped by Christianity. It is surely no accident that up to the 20th century the Jacobite Christians of present-day Turkey remained in the majority in the mountain massif of the Turabdin and in the Izala Mountains (the border region between the Persian Empire and Byzantium in Upper Mesopotamia). The so-called "Nestorians" held their ground above all in the eastern Hakkari Mountains and in the triangle between Lake Van, Lake Urmia and the mountains around Mossul. The Armenians on the other hand, above all the Armenian traders, lived in the cities like Constantinople, Edessa, Amide or Tarsus. Time and again influential Christians in the administration, physicians at the court of the caliph or scientists due to their connections managed to prevent more evil and to help their fellow believers.

De Lacy O'Leary's book "How Greek science passed to the Arabs"¹ describes how the Syrian Christians

imparted Greek education and culture to the sons of the desert. As examples of those numerous Christians who prepared the ground for the sciences and arts in Islam only the great physician Hunayn Ibn Ishaq or the Bochtiso family (who are associated with the heyday of the sciences in Baghdad) shall be mentioned here. During the first centuries of Islam - with the help of the Christians – Arab culture developed and would play a leading role in the history of world cultures. The contribution of the Christians has often been overlooked.

The "Djeehad" like the Dhimmi system belongs to the fundamentals of Islamic culture. The "Harbis", the inhabitants of the "Dar-el-Harb", are destined to fall under Islamic law through war ("harb") and conversion. The Djeehad as a permanent war excludes peace and only permits a provisional armistice (muhadana). The holy war is the duty of all Muslims; all believers have to contribute to it with their physical person, their belongings and their writings. The Djeehad can also be carried on with peaceful means through conversion, propaganda and bribery. "Dhimmi existence as an immediate result of the Djeehad is subject to a contract that cancels the original right of the conqueror to the physical person and the belongings of the defeated by means of the latter's consent to pay tribute and submit to Islam."²

3. The Turks

In the 6th century the early Turks in Central Asia were Buddhists, Manicheans and Nestorian Christians. They were no Indo-Europeans and neither related to the

1 De Lacy O'Leary: How Greek Science passed to the Arabs, 2nd edition, Dehli 2001

2 Bat Ye-or: Der Niedergang des orientalischen Christentums unter dem Islam (7.-20. Jahrhundert), Gräfelding 2002, 38.

Greeks nor to the Syrians or Armenians. The present-day Turks are successors of the Oghusians, who lived in the Kasachian steppe north of Lake Aral in the 10th century. Among the mounted warriors, who as slaves (Mamelukes) often entered the service of foreign sovereigns, were the Seldchuks, whose head was a nomadic Khan. In the course of time diverse Turkish tribes migrated from Siberia to the Levant. After Islam had taken root among the Turks, Ghazism developed among the pugnacious nomads. Ghazis were mounted nomads, who prowled, systematically attacked and looted Christian areas. Through the institution of the Ghazi the Turks managed to conquer Asia Minor in the course of time. The population was worn down and at first fled to the fortified cities. After the Seldchuk sultan Alp Arslan's victory over the emperor Romanos IV Diogenes in the battle of Mantzikert (19th August 1071) the Seldchuk Ghazis flooded the Anatolian plateau, which soon led to a mass flight of the rural Christian population. The year 1071 marks the beginning of the Turkish conquest of Asia Minor; it was the beginning of the end of the Christian culture. The undisciplined Turkmens in war leader Alp Arslan's entourage remained in the country. As so often, powerful external rival groups were called on for help. Romanos IV, who had been deserted by his own nobility, negotiated a contract with the sultan, thus being saved from territorial losses. He had to pay a ransom, release prisoners and put auxiliary troops at the sultan's disposal. He was, however, blinded and deposed by senior officials. Now the Turks didn't feel bound to the contract any more and invaded Asia Minor, without the new emperor Michael VII doing anything about it. The Seldchuk Turks inundated the Anatolian plateau; only now the defeat of Mantzikert turned into a catastrophe, a blow that Byzantium would

no more recover from. It paid dearly for having dissolved the Armenian military forces with its militias. The Seldchuk Empire now stretched from Central Asia as far as Anatolia. Alp Arslan's cousin Suleiman at first was army commander of the sultan of the Great Seldchuks in West Anatolia, around 1080, however, he ruled over the complete area from Kilikia to the Hellespontos (now the Marmara Sea) and founded the Seldchuk realm of "Rum", the Roman sultanate. As early as in 1087 the Seldchuks conquered Edessa and Antiochia, where the population was essentially Christian (Greeks, Syrians and Armenians).

Additionally, the sultanate of the Danishmendids was formed around the Christian stronghold Caesarea (Kayseri) and Melitene (today Malatya), which at times was the seat of the Jacobite patriarchs. On the upper Euphrates the principality of the Mengutshekides, the one of the Saltukides around Erzurum and the one of the Ortokides around Mardin (1107-1409), the Jacobite centre, came into being. After the death of the Great Seldchuk sultan Malik Shah (1092) his empire was divided into single emirates. In the realm of the Ortokides of Mardin the Syrian Christians were living so pleasantly that the patriarch moved his seat from Armida to Mardin. The preserved evangelarium (gospel book) of bishop Dioskoros of Mardin (1222-1282) with its rich illustrations documents what a degree of cultural prosperity was still possible for the Christians even in the 13th century.

The number of nomadic Turkmens seems not to have exceeded half a million to a million people in the 12th century. Anatolia changed due to the continuous immigration of Turkmens from Central Asia.³ The Ghazis

3 Josef Matuz: Das Osmanische Reich. Grundlinien seiner Geschichte, Darmstadt, 2nd ed., 1990, 20.

drove out the Christians from the Anatolian plateau; only in some areas like in Pontus or Kappadocia Greek-Orthodox Christians held the ground until the First World War. The cave monasteries of Göreme and the subterranean cities show how the Christians sought to protect themselves against the Ghazis, who practiced the Djeehad fanatically. Fleeing from the Mongols, further tribes and refugees and other Turkish people came, later melting into a single people with the Turkmens. It seems therefore that in the Anatolian highland before the appearance of the Ottomans at about 1280 they were in the majority compared to the Byzantines, the Syrians and the Armenians. The emperor Alexios I (1081-1118), the founder of the Komnenes, had to receive the Seldchuks, who had come within the sight of Constantinople, as confederates into the empire in the fight against the Normans in Epirus and the Pechenegs on the Danube. Thus he could at least keep up the appearance of supremacy.

The first wave of Turkish expansion suffered a setback in the First Crusade, which in 1097 led to the reconquest of Nicaea (today Isnik) by the crusaders. Nicaea had already been dominated by the Seldchuks. The success of the Latin crusaders visibly changed the situation in Asia Minor in favour of the Christians. At least the Armenians welcomed the victory of the crusaders, who conquered Antiochia and also Edessa and there established a Christian principality that lasted until 1144. The crusaders, who had sworn the oath of fealty to the emperor in Constantinople, however, did not hand over the conquered areas to him, but founded Latin crusader's states there. The success of the crusaders had chiefly been possible because the Abbasid caliphate had since long fallen into ruin; the Turks, who had at first served the

caliph as warriors and slaves, set up for themselves and established emirates from Anatolia as far as Central Asia.

Alexios I, however, failed to reconquer the areas lost in the east. The Seldchuks more and more took root in Anatolia, and the Greek population retreated into the coastal cities. Thousands of Armenians fled to the west, where large Armenian colonies came into being in Constantinople, Thessalonica and Varna. The emperor supported the displacement of the Christian population toward the west by settling them in Greece. Only with great effort a land bridge to the Greek cities on the south coast of Asia Minor could be built via Philadelphia. In the process, essential parts of the eastern half of the empire came under Byzantine control for another 200 years. The emperor's son John II Komnenos (1118-1143) reconquered the territories on the south coast and the area in Kilikia, where Armenian refugees had established the principality of Armenia Minor. His son and successor Manuel I (1143-1180) attacked the sultanate of the Rumseldchuks and forced sultan Masud I to leave his residence Ikonion. In 1159 he marched as far as Antiochia, where the crusaders had to acknowledge his supremacy. The attempt to finally subdue the Seldchuk sultanate of Iconium (today Konya) failed in the battle of Myriokephalon on September 17th, 1176; Byzantium had to give up the plan to reconquer central Asia Minor from the Turks. In the spring of 1180 the Seldchuks reached the coast of the Mediterranean in Attaleia (today Antalya).

In 1190 – under the emperor Isaak II Angelos – came the third crusade, which failed like the preceding one. The 4th crusade led to the conquest of Constantinople by the crusaders. Constantinople would never recover from this blow. In the Byzantine world this action of the Catholics has not been forgotten up to the present day;

on the occasion of the 800th anniversary the Orthodox Church vainly waited for a conciliatory gesture. From 1204 until 1261 Constantinople was the capital of the so-called "Latin Empire", another western crusaders' state on Greek soil. In Asia Minor the empire Nicaea was established under Theodore I Laskaris (1204-1222), who continued the tradition of Byzantium. In 1209 the Latin emperor formed an alliance with Sultan Kaikosru I of Ikonium: Christians supported the Turks against the Greeks! Members of the Komnene dynasty founded the Trabzon Empire on the Black Sea, whose central regions were conquered by the Turks as late as in 1461. The Nicaea Empire held the ground and even managed to win back parts of Greece from the crusaders.

The Mongolian invasion of 1242 confronted Asia Minor with new problems. The emperor John Vatatzes formed an alliance with Iconium (today Konya), whose sultan was defeated by the Mongols, who conquered Caesarea in Kappadocia. Michael Palaiologos (1259-1282) reconquered Constantinople from the crusaders in 1261 and founded the last Byzantine imperial dynasty of the Palaiologians. When the Mongols advanced against the Seldchuks, many Turks fled into Byzantine territory, where they met with hardly any resistance. Until 1280 the Turks conquered the southwest of Anatolia. In the Byzantine defeats against the Turks at Magnesia the Ghazi emir Osman made his appearance, the founder of the Ottoman Empire, which – in the course of half a century – even crossed the Dardanelles and gained a foothold in Europe.

Since the conquest of their country by the Byzantines and Turks the Armenians had withdrawn southward to the Taurus Mountains. From as early as 1080 onward Armenian refugees had founded a principality around

Sis in Kilikia, which was subordinate to the Rubinides. The Catholicos Gregory III (1113-1166) moved his seat from Ani to Hromkla on the Euphrates. Prince Leo I was crowned king by the Catholicos and the archbishop of Mayence in Tarsus in 1198.⁴ The minting of coins was meant to demonstrate the independence from Byzantium. In 1226 Prince Hethum I (1226-1270) of the Hethumid family seized power. After an initial alliance with the sultan of Rum, he joined the Mongolian side in 1252, securing his power in this way. When the Mongols stormed Baghdad in 1258, Armenian reinforcements assisted. Only with great effort Leo II (1270-1289) was able to assert his power in 1281 after fights with the Mamelukes of Egypt. In 1291 the crusaders' last Palestine base Acre fell. In 1292 the Mamelukes conquered Hromkla and abducted the Catholicos. The successor residing in Sis once more contacted papacy in order to get help from the west. Hethum II (+1307) converted to Catholicism and became a Franciscan. Among the most important personalities in the late phase of Armenia Minor is the historiographer Hethum of Korykos – a nephew of Hethum I -, who in 1307 wrote his historical work "*Flor des estoires de la terre d'Orient*" in Poitiers, in which he was able to draw on personal encounters with the Mongolian Khans.

In 1342 the French Catholic Guy de Lusignan became king. Constantine III had to simultaneously fight the Armenians (who were hostile to Rome) and the Mamelukes. In 1375 the Mamelukes occupied Sis and thus conquered the last Christian principality in East Anatolia. Leo V, the last king, was imprisoned with his retinue in Cairo and bailed out by the Pope and Venice in 1382; he was released on the condition never to set

4 Anne Elizabeth Redgate: *The Armenians*, Oxford 2000, 257.

foot to Armenian territory again, and was roaming Europe as a beggar and refugee until 1393.⁵ From 1400 onward a large part of Armenia was under the rule of the Turkmen dynasty Kara Koyunlu ("Horde of the black Ram"), whose residence was in Van. From now on for centuries the fate of the Armenians was determined by the Turks, the Persians and the Russians.

4. The last Phase of the Byzantine Empire

The origins of the Ottoman Empire lay some 60 kms south of the temporary Byzantine capital Nicaea. In Asia Minor around 1300 Byzantium just retained Nicaea, Nicomedia, Brussa, Sardes, Philadelphia, Magnesia and some ports like Herakleia on the Pontus, Phocaea and Smyrna. In 1304 Byzantium still managed to defeat the Ottomans before the besieged city of Philadelphia. Osman's son Orhan (1326-1360) in 1326 succeeded in conquering Brussa (today Bursa), which became the first Ottoman capital. By moving the centre of gravity of the shrunk Byzantine Empire to Greece, the epoch of the civil wars led to the conquest of Nicaea (today Iznik) in 1331 and of Nikomedia (today Izmit). The Ottomans conquered Ankyra (today Ankara) and reached the south coast of Asia Minor. The Byzantine politician and later emperor John Kantakuzenos cooperated with the Seldchuks against the Ottomans. Now the Ottomans also built a fleet and attacked the Byzantine possessions in Greece. During the civil war Kantakuzenos was alternately allied with the Ottomans and the Seldchuks. In 1352 the Turks gained a footing in the fortress Tzympe near Gallipoli on the European side; in 1354 Sultan Orhan's son Suleiman conquered Gallipoli and thus gained a base for expansion

5 Aziz S. Atkiya: *Kreuzfahrer und Händler. Die Begegnung von Christentum und Islam*, Stuttgart 1964, 126.

toward Europe. In 1361 the Ottomans conquered Adrianopolis (today Edirne); Murat I (1360-1389) moved the capital there two years later. Byzantium was now encircled by the Turks from two sides; from 1389-1401 Constantinople was besieged by the Turks for the first time and had to conclude a contract of protection and tribute with the Ottomans. Sultan Bayezit I (1389-1402) additionally conquered the west Anatolian emirates. Manuel II was forced to take part in the conquest of the last Byzantine city of Philadelphia as an Ottoman vassal on Bayezit's side. The Byzantine Empire seemed bound to go under when the Central Asian ruler Timur Lenk (Tamburlaine) defeated and arrested the Ottoman sultan near Ankara in 1402; thus the Byzantine Empire gained a respite. Above all in the eastern part of Asia Minor and in upper Mesopotamia Timur destroyed numerous churches and monasteries, like e.g. the large church of Hah in Turabdin. In Van he had the Armenians thrown down from the city-walls, in Sivas he had thousands of them buried alive and stamped to death by his cavalry. The two Syrian churches should never recover from this campaign of extermination.

In 1403 a contract between Byzantium and the Ottomans was concluded, which cancelled the emperor's obligations as a vassal. Mehmed I (1413-1421) adhered to the policy of coexistence; only Murat II (1421-1451) devastated Greece and besieged Constantinople anew, which became tributary again in 1424. In 1430 Thessalonica, too, fell into the Turks' hands. On May 29th, 1453 Mehmed II (1451-1451) conquered Constantinople, which from now on was the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Only the Genoese colony of Galata remained under Christian administration for the time being. Galata continued to be characteristically Christian well into the

19th century, and made up the "Frankish quarter", today the area of foreign diplomats. The emperor Constantine was killed in action. Out of the approximately 50,000 inhabitants some 4,000 were massacred; a total of 50,000 Greeks is said to have been enslaved. The sultan exposed the city to looting; the imperial archive was completely destroyed, the Hagia Sophia turned into a mosque.⁶ Now in Asia Minor solely the Trabzon Empire was in the hands of the Greeks. Mehmed II also conquered this last Greek bastion on August 15th, 1461. The emperor David was taken to Constantinople; the complete male population enslaved. In 1463 the emperor was executed in prison together with six out his seven sons. "The Greeks were facing no easy future. They were promised peace and justice and opportunities to become wealthy. But they were second-rate citizens. Servitude of necessity brings about demoralisation; the Greeks were unable to shirk its effects...Greek history under Turkish rule is painful and unpleasant. And yet, despite all its defects and shortcomings, the Greek Church kept alive."⁷ The church of the apostles with the graves of Constantine and the other emperors was destroyed; in its place the mosque of victory was built. With the exception of one, all churches were at least temporarily turned into mosques. Monasteries and libraries were destroyed. The fall of Constantinople was mourned throughout the Christian world, which had, however, not provided any efficient help. Only in 1529, when the Turks stood before Vienna, the emperor of the west realised the greatness of the danger to the Christian world. In 1472 Zoe Palaiologina, the niece of the last emperor, married the Russian grand

6 David Stracton: *Der Schwarze Dienstag. Der Fall von Byzanz*, Vienna-Hamburg 1967, 291 and Steven Runciman: *Die Eroberung von Konstantinopel 1453*, Munich 1977, 154f.

7 *ibid.*, 198.

duke Iwan III, who adopted the title of tsar and sealed with the imperial double eagle. A Russian monk then formulated the ideology of Moscow as the "Third Rome". The Russian tsar as the successor of the emperors of Byzantium later claimed a sort of protectorate over the Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire.

5. The Christians under the Turkish Millet system

Sultan Mehmed II appointed the monk George Scholarios, who had been an antagonist to the union of the Byzantine church with papacy, patriarch. He ordered the Greek subjects to form a Millet (from Arabian "milla"=religion), a self-governed community within the empire, under the authority of the patriarch, who was to receive ornate, crosier and a breast cross as insignia from the sultan ("Rum Millet"). According to the report of the historiographer Phrantzes, Mehmed handed a written document to the patriarch, guaranteeing him immunity, tax exemption, safety from deposition, freedom of movement and the right that all these privileges would devolve upon his successors. In a form concerning the investiture of a metropolitan there is a passage stating that the latter had to pay a certain sum to the sultan, exercised the jurisdiction over the Christians and was granted the usufruct of church possessions, vineyards, orchards and farm lands on the same conditions as his predecessor.⁸ Ecclesiastical courts were to negotiate all cases of religious importance among the Orthodox, like marital law, wills and guardianships. Law courts appointed by the patriarch were to enforce civil law among Orthodox Christians. Criminal procedures that involved Muslims were handled by Turkish courts.

8 Ibid., 162 and Ernst Werner: Die Geburt einer Großmacht: Die Osmanen, Weimar 1985, pp. 334f.

Thanks to the Millet system the patriarch's power in respect to the formerly autocephalic churches increased enormously, which was not in line with canon law; from 1517 onward the Orthodox patriarchates of Alexandria, Antiochia and Jerusalem also came under Constantinople's rule. The church served the state as a cheap and well-organised administrative body of the Christian part of the population ("raya" from the Arabian word for "cattle"). Basically, the Christians were permitted to keep their churches, but they were forbidden to build new ones.⁹ The village and district heads were to collect taxes and deliver them to the state. Clergymen were tax-exempt and the only men allowed to have beards. Christians were forbidden to carry weapons and had to be identifiable through their clothes. Boy conscription – the obligation of Christian children to serve with the Janissaries – remained in force. In Constantinople, which later on came to be called Istanbul, four districts were allotted to the Christians; only there they kept their churches. Only later here too all other churches were gradually taken from them, until there remained just three Christian churches in the 18th century. At the beginning, the Church of the Apostles was the seat of the patriarch. From 1454, however, it was the Pammakaristos monastery. From Trabzon and the neighbouring cities 5,000 Christian families were deported to Istanbul. In the Ottoman Empire the situation of the "Zimmi" (wards), who had to pay poll tax (harac), roughly corresponded to that of the serfs in Christian countries. In a pastoral letter in 1454 the patriarch Gennadios praised the sultan and reproached the believers for having incurred their big misfortune through their sins. At that time the

9 A. Diomedes Kyriakos: *Geschichte der orientalischen Kirchen von 1453-1898*, Hildesheim 1975, 6.

Orthodox patriarch was only backed by the metropolitans of Herakleia, Ankyra, Ephesos, Kaisareia, Nikomedia, Pisidia and Kyzikos. With Raphael in 1475, a Serb became orthodox patriarch for the first time.

In 1461 Mehmed II formed after a later report a millet for the Armenians, too; the Armenian bishop Hovacim (Joachim) of Brussa – who was said to have prophesied victory to the sultan – was assigned the superintendence of all Armenian churches of the Empire. He was also vested with the superintendence of the Syrians, the Chaldeans, the Copts and Georgians, who were not given a millet of their own.¹⁰ Later the residence of the Armenian patriarch was established at the Kum-Kapu (sand door). The sultan's purpose was to create a counterweight to the Greek patriarchate and to weaken the Catholicate in Edschmiadzin that was situated on Persian territory. The Armenian patriarch was also given the responsibility for Armenians concerning marital law, criminal law and law of succession. When Palestine became Turkish too, the orthodox patriarch also gained the primacy over the patriarch of Jerusalem. In this way the Armenian Millet ("Ermeni Millet") at the end of the 17th century turned into a kind of "Armenian state within the state, but without an army".¹¹ Ecclesiastically the patriarch, however, was in theory subordinate to the Catholicos of all Armenians in Edschmiadzin. Many Armenians moved to Istanbul, where they served the sultan as grand viziers, generals and bankers. The seat of the Greek-Orthodox patriarch was moved to the Demetrios Church of Xyloporta in 1586 and to St.

10 Aziz S. Atiya: *A History of Eastern Christianity*, London 1968, 336 and Martin Rahn: *Die Entstehung des armenischen Patriarchats von Konstantinopel*, Münster 2002, 37-61.

11 Friedrich Heyer, Hrsg.: *Die Kirche Armeniens (=Die Kirchen der Welt 18)*, Stuttgart 1978, 166.

George's Church in the Phanar, where his seat still is nowadays. The orthodox patriarch Maximos III in a letter of 1480 praised the tolerance of Mehmed II in comparison with Venetian religious policies in Crete.¹² In the first phase of Turkish rule the situation of the Christians then was fairly tolerable. After the conquest of Palestine Selim I in 1517 guaranteed the Armenians their possessions and institutions against any disturbance.

The situation of the Christians in the Ottoman Empire deteriorated more and more in the course of time. The building of new churches was strictly forbidden. The sums for investiture were constantly raised; Joachim I was deposed in 1502, because he was having a church built; the impoverished church had to pay 1,000 ducats more than before, i.e. 3,500 ducats. When in 1475 Raphael was unable to raise the sum (the "Kharadge") he had to beg in the streets of Constantinople with a chain around his neck. He died in the prison for unfaithful officials.¹³ In the Turkish-Persian war (1548-1555) the Armenian Catholicos Stephen V asked the European powers for help. In 1554 Erivan was conquered by the Turks and levelled to the ground. Murat III (1574-1595) reconquered East Armenia in 1578 and had numerous cities and churches destroyed as far as Nagornij Karabakh. In 1580 he had 60,000 Armenians resettled to West Anatolia by force. In 1603 Shah Abbas I conquered the cities of Erivan, Tabris and Erzurum and destroyed them entirely. In 1604 the Persians drove away the Turks; during the withdrawal Shah Abbas carried off the inhabitants to Persia; in all, 300,000 Armenians were resettled by force.¹⁴ In the

12 Werner (1985), 336.

13 Nicolae Jorga: *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, vol. 3: until 1640, ND Frankfurt 1990, 200.

14 Erich Renhart – Jasmine Dum-Tragut, eds.: *Armenien*, Graz-Vienna 1997, 39.

Turkish-Persian peace treaty of 1636 East Armenia fell to Persia; until 1827 the situation did not change any more. The Orthodox patriarchs were frequently maltreated; between 1625 and 1700 there were 50 patriarchs! Christians were not allowed to bear witness against Muslims at court and – with the exception of priests – had to pay poll tax. They were neither permitted to join the army nor to fill public posts. Conversion to Christianity was forbidden under capital punishment. Christians were not allowed to engrave their names in the gems of their rings and to sing or be noisy in their houses. Christian churches were forbidden to have crosses and to toll.

In 1520 Sultan Selim I ordered his grand vizier to turn all Christian churches into mosques, to forbid the Christian service and to inflict the death penalty on all Christians who refused to convert to Islam.¹⁵ The patriarch Jeremiah I reminded the sultan of the promises of Mehmed II and had three old Janissaries appear, who had experienced the conquest of Constantinople and could confirm this. The sultan cancelled the order, but commanded to turn all churches of Constantinople into mosques; the Christians were allowed to build wooden churches. It seems that the order was not uncompromisingly enforced, as in 1577 Sultan Murat III renewed Selim's regulation. This time, too, the execution of the law could be avoided through big bribes paid by the Christians. Only with great effort Sultan Mehmed III (1595-1603) could be dissuaded from the enforcement of such a measure by the French ambassador.

In comparison to the Christians, the Jews had a much pleasanter fate. Since their expulsion from Spain they had

15 Kyriakos (1975), 9.

been gladly received in Turkey and won great influence at the centres of trade.¹⁶ Textile trade became a sort of Jewish monopoly. The Jews worked in all sorts of professions and won great influence at the sultan's court, primarily as court physicians. In the 16th century Turkey was the only country where one could declare oneself as Jew without danger. When in 1556 the pope wanted to have the Marranes (Jews forced to be christened) arrested in Ancona, Sultan Suleiman demanded him to release the Marranes, who were Turkish subjects, and in the case of a refusal he threatened repressions against the Christians in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁷ Since the Turkish conquest of Palestine (1517) here, too, many Jews immigrated, primarily settling in Galilee and Jerusalem. At no time until the end of the Ottoman Empire had the Jews to suffer from such molestations as the Christians.

Mehmed II and his successors also managed to conquer the eastern area of today's Turkey and in the process to annexe the dominion of the Seldchuks and Turkmens to their empire. Round the middle of the 15th century most Anatolian emirates were under Ottoman control. Thus the Karaman Empire of Konya was also conquered by the Ottomans in 1466. The Christians in present-day Eastern Turkey at that time still were living in Kilikia, under the rule of the Mamelukes, which was ended by the Ottomans in 1517. At about the middle of the 15th century Edessa, Amida and Mardin still belonged to the empire of the Mongolian Ilkhanes of Persia; later partly to the Upper Mesopotamian empire of the Hamdanides and partly to Persia. Since about 1520, however, only the two great powers Persia and the

16 Max Wurmbrand-Cecil Roth: *Das Volk der Juden. 4000 Jahre Kampf ums Überleben*, Wiesbaden 1989, 270-283.

17 *Ibid.*, 275.

Ottoman Empire had shared a border, which had been changed in various wars. This caused Armenia to be alternately under Ottoman and Persian rule.

Thanks to French support of its policy the Turkish government – called the "High Gate" - under Suleiman the Magnificent in 1536 concluded a contract ("Capitulation") stating that French subjects in the Ottoman Empire were subordinate to the jurisdiction of the French consul.¹⁸ This contract became the pattern for others. In a new capitulation of 1740 the Ottomans granted France a protective right over the Catholics in their empire. The protection was also valid for French merchants and their partners; this regulation made it possible to occasionally extend protection to non-French Christian familiars. After the election, with its usual financial blackmailing, under Patriarch Dionysus II (1537 and 1545-1555) the cross on the Patriarchion was removed by the Turks and the Demetrius Church - popular as a place of pilgrimage – was dismantled. There rested but 7-8 churches in Istanbul: St. Nicolas, St. George, St. Constantine and the Panhagia and Chrysopagus churches in Galata.¹⁹ After the mass resettling of the Greeks from Sinope and Trabzon to Istanbul and the Turkish-speaking Orthodox from Karamania, Greek was above all still spoken in Trabzon, Bursa, Nicomedia, Smyrna and Ephesus, whereas Philadelphia and Sivas were almost entirely Turkish.

After the reformation the Protestants offered themselves to the Orthodox as allies against popish missionary endeavours. Patriarch Joasaph II (1555-1565) was in correspondence with Melanchthon, a deacon Demetrios Mysos studied in Wittenberg and other

18 Matuz (1990), 122f.

19 Jorga 3 (1990), 202.

students in Padova. In 1574 the Tubing theologians Jacob Andreae and Martin Crusius turned to Patriarch Jeremiah II, who critically occupied himself with Protestant theology. Cyrill Lucaris, who had studied in Padova and was deposed as patriarch five times (1612, 1621-1623, 1623-1630, 1630-1634, 1634-1635 and 1637-1638), also extensively delved into Protestantism. In 1616 he wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury that his fellow-believers severely suffered under the Turks.²⁰ Cyrill reformed the patriarchal academy, sent Greek theologians to London, Oxford and German colleges to study there and to prepare the establishment of a Greek printing office in Istanbul. The Vatican took great effort toward strengthening the opposition against Cyrill within the Orthodoxy. As early as in 1609 the French envoy had obtained a residence permit for the Jesuits in Istanbul. King Henry IV supported the Jesuits, because he had been informed that the Greeks were ready to rise against the Turkish tyrants. In 1615 Austria in article 6 of the Vienna peace treaty obtained the permission for Catholics to build new churches. In 1622 there were already nine Catholic churches in the suburb Pera beyond the Golden Horn, and in Istanbul proper two churches and four monasteries (Jesuits, Franciscans and Dominicans). In 1623 the Jesuits also erected a college in Smyrna.²¹ Athanasios Patellarios, a friend of the Jesuits, became patriarch after another deposition of Cyrill in 1634. The Jesuits reported Cyrill to the sultan, saying he had published an article in England in which he insulted Islam and exhorted the Greeks to rise. After he had been deposed, he flew to Ancona and asked the pope for help. On Austria's and France's initiative Cyrill II Contari became patriarch.

20 Kyriakos (1975), 98.

21 Ludwig von Pastor: *Geschichte der Päpste*, vol. 13/1, 9th ed., Freiburg-Rome 1955, 108-110.

Eventually the patriarch, who had had the first Greek printing office established in Istanbul and who offered resistance against latinization through the Jesuits – was strangled on the order of the great vizier in 1636, after the imperial envoy had accused him of having had a hand in the conquest of Asow by the Cossacks and of stirring up the Greeks toward an insurgence.²² The whole affair demonstrates to what degree the great powers were already pursuing their policies at the expense of the Christians in the Ottoman Empire.

In the course of time the Orthodox Patriarchate got more and more under the influence of the Greek notables ("archontes"). Michael Kantakuzenos demanded 500 ducats for the appointment of every metropolitan. An intrinsic improvement of the situation was therefore impossible. The Ottoman Empire dealt with the matter in a most pragmatic way. Sultan Murat III renewed the order that for building Christian churches only wood was permitted. Around 1600 once again the most beautiful churches – domed or with leaden roofs – were turned into mosques by the Turks. Armenian traders – who had contacts to their tribesmen on the Crimea, in Galicia or Venice – were in a better situation than the Jacobites or Nestorians, who had no contacts outside the Ottoman Empire. The Maronites in Lebanon, however, the only oriental Christians subordinate to the pope since the middle ages, did have such contacts. In 1622 Pope Gregory XV founded the congregation de propaganda fide that was meant to fulfil the order of global mission. Under Murat IV (1623-1640) Istanbul had 200,000 inhabitants and 70 churches. The Jesuits, too, were active in the capital. In 1648 Pope Innocent X founded a Maronite college in Ravenna. Franciscans and Jesuits were trying

22 *ibid.*, 13/2, 751-760 (a one-sided curial representation)

to do missionary work even in the Ottoman Empire. The Armenian Catholicos Philipp swore obedience to the pope in 1655. In the Caucasus Mountains Carmelites, Theatines and Capuchins were active. When the Syrian-orthodox patriarchate was vacant in 1662, the Catholic Church succeeded in having the archbishop Andrew Akhidian – unionized with Rome – appointed patriarch by the sultan.²³ The Armenian Catholicos Jacob in 1662 travelled to Rome together with 25 bishops and on the way confessed to the Catholic creed before a Latin archbishop in Constantinople. The papacy in 1667/68 also managed to win a part of the so-called Nestorians over to their side. The Metropolitan Joseph of Armida swore to an agreement with the Pope and in 1681 came to Rome; the Pope then founded a second Chaldean patriarchate in Amida (Diyarbakir) that would last until 1821.²⁴ The Holy See interfered in oriental politics; in 1683 Innocent XI urged the Shah of Persia to invade Turkey to weaken the Turks who were advancing toward Vienna.²⁵

The situation of the Orthodox Church became ever more wretched. The patriarchs were appointed by the great vizier; the candidates had to turn up with full purses. Timotheus II (1612-1621) had to pay as much as 8,000 ducats.²⁶ In Rhodes there were prison cells ready for deposed patriarchs. Many patriarchs only got their post because a prince in Moldavia or Valachy had paid the money for them. Thanks to the notables the Greeks were

23 Ludwig von Pastor: *Geschichte der Päpste*, vol. 14/1, 8th ed., Freiburg – Rome 1960, 146.

24 Wilhelm Baum – Dietmar W. Winkler: *Die Apostolische Kirche des Ostens. Geschichte der sogenannten Nestorianer*, Klagenfurt 2000, 108f.

25 Pastor 14/2 (1960), 784.

26 Nicolae Jorga: *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, vol. 4: until 1774, ND Frankfurt 1990, 22.

saved from Islamification in the 16th century. In 1662 the British ambassador reported to the Foreign Office that churches had been burnt down in Constantinople and Pera two years ago; Armenians, Greeks and Catholics had bought back the sites and repaired the churches, but the Vizier, however, had the churches destroyed and sentenced the responsible persons to long terms of imprisonment.²⁷ Among the Armenians the Catholicos of Sis in 1663 asked King Louis XIV of France to intervene – a call for help that was to go to Europe often yet!

Since Peter the Great in 1696 had conquered the Ottoman fortress and trading centre Asow, Russia had been advancing toward the Caucasus and was able to intervene in the goings-on. Catherine II the Great of Russia was planning to restore the Byzantine Empire as a Russian satellite state. France was to receive Egypt and Syria, Russia – on the other hand – Asia Minor and territories stretching as far as India.²⁸ In the 18th century Greek merchants called "Phanariots" gained great influence on Ottoman policies. Alexander Maurokordates sort of directed policies; he also determined who was to become patriarch against good payment. At the beginning of the 18th century the Greeks began to come to terms with the Ottoman system. Entire groups, like Greeks having come to Istanbul from Karamania, adopted the Turkish language. They had little sympathy for Peter the Great's 1711 plan to liberate Constantinople from the Turks. Above all the simple clergy was antagonistic to popish attempts to proselytize the Christians in the Ottoman Empire that were pursued by France and Austria with the help of Jesuits, Minorites and Capuchins. This was an inner Christian conflict.

27 Bat Yeór (2002), 372.

28 Matuz (1990), 209.

In 1730 Christians again were forbidden to build new churches; in 1775 repaired churches were torn down. Churches were controlled; if a newly inserted nail or tile was found, the churches were destroyed. In 1758 the British ambassador reported that dress regulations for Christians and Jews were strictly controlled; Christians wearing normal clothes were killed.²⁹ In 1785 the ambassador reported to the Foreign Office that when Orthodox Christians had rebuilt their burnt-down churches, these new buildings had been destroyed.³⁰ Only thanks to pressure of the western great powers and the interventions of the Pope the situation could be improved.

The Armenians, too, maintained their identity in the Ottoman Empire. In the Armenian city of New Julfa – founded by Abbas I near Isfahan in 1604 – the first Armenian book was printed in 1641, in Edschmiadzin on the other hand as late as in 1771. Popish proselytising frequently was successful with the Armenians. Under the influence of the Jesuits Mechitar of Sebaste (+1749) converted to Catholicism and founded the Mechitharist order in 1701. When it was prosecuted in Turkey, the monks flew to Venice, where two years later they were allotted the isle of S. Lazzaro. They erected a monastery with an important library there. Mechithar published an Armenian dictionary in 1749; his legacy was a religious institution that by way of its literary, cultural, pedagogical and scientific activity brought intellectual innovation to the Armenians and made the survival of the Armenian tradition possible. In 1722 the government renewed the ban on converting Asian Greeks to Latin Christianity.³¹ After the death of the unified Catholicos Michael of

29 Bat Yeór (2002), 374.

30 *Ibid.*

31 Jorga IV (1990), 393.

Kilikia the bishops in 1737 elected Abraham Ardzivan Catholicos, who travelled to Rome in 1742 and was confirmed there. He moved his residence to Lebanon, which had a semi-autonomous status at that time. The papal attempts at unification were not restricted to Greeks and Armenians though; Innocent XI established the mentioned patriarchate for the "Chaldeans", the followers of the "Nestorian" apostolic Eastern Church in Amida (Diyarbakir), who were united with Rome.³²

In the peace treaty of Kütschük-Kainardschi (1774) the Ottoman Empire had to grant tsarist Russia the function of a protective power of the Orthodox Christians, and to permit the Russians to establish consulates.³³ Papacy again and again exploited the ambition of oriental church dignitaries that were feeling they had been passed over at patriarchal elections to fix up unions in this way. After the death of the Jacobite patriarch Ignatius George IV (+1781) bishop Dionysus Michael Giarve went from Aleppo to Mardin and had himself elected patriarch by four converted bishops; Pius VI acknowledged him in 1783.³⁴ Mardin now became the seat of the unified patriarch. In 1782 there were 3,000 Catholics in Smyrna and 20,000 in Istanbul, where a Latin titular archbishop resided. In 1783 Russia conquered the Khanate on the Crimean. In 1795 the Persians devastated Tbilisi and massacred 5,000 inhabitants; in 1801 the last king of East Georgia delivered his country to the Russian tsar. After the Russians had crushingly defeated the Persians in 1828 the territory of the present-day Republic of Armenia fell to Russia. Thus the spheres

32 Ludwig von Pastor: *Geschichte der Päpste*, vol. 15, 8th ed., Freiburg-Rome ND 1961, 270

33 Jorga IV (1990), 511f.

34 Ludwig von Pastor: *Geschichte der Päpste*, vol. 16/3, 8th ed., Freiburg-Rome 1955, 276f.

of influence were established: Russia supported the Orthodox Christians, France the Catholics. The monks of the Mechitharist monastery founded in Trieste in 1773, who had had a printing-office at their disposal since 1773, moved to Vienna in 1805: Today one of the most important Armenian library is in Vienna. Armenian culture in particular survived thanks to communities in exile: in Lwow, on the Crimean, in Venice and in Vienna, where the Armenians enjoyed the government's protection. In this way the two great powers Russia and Austria had been in a position to influence the inner conditions of the Ottoman Empire in the period of its decline since the end of the 18th century. The Jacobite Church, which did not – like the Greek-Orthodox, the Armenian or the Melkite one – have such contacts abroad, suffered most from intellectual exhaustion, until it got into contact with English, French and German orientalists in the 19th century. How numerous the Christians were, can be inferred from contemporary travel diaries.

6. The Christians in the Travel Diaries of the 17th and 18th Centuries

In 1631 the French travel writer Jean Baptiste Tavernier came to Constantinople, where he stayed for eleven months and then travelled to Persia via Erzurum and Erivan. In 1675 his description of the conditions around the Serail was published; as early as in 1680 the work was edited in German. The interest in the Ottoman Empire was necessarily increasing due to the Turkish advance in Europe.

In 1766 the German Carsten Niebuhr – who was serving the Danes – visited Turkey; in Bursa he noticed that out of the 19,000 houses 1,200 were inhabited by Armenians and 700 by Greeks. In Istanbul he counted 23

Greek and three Armenian churches; he declared that in Pera there lived a clergyman who had been appointed archbishop by the Pope.³⁵ Otherwise no exact figures concerning the Christian population are given. He obviously had not noticed them anywhere else; only Mardin says that there were "many Christians".³⁶

Quite a good survey of the situation of the Christian minority in Asia Minor is given by Anton Friedrich Büsching in his "New Description of the Earth" (1769). Büsching describes the organisation of the Orthodox, Armenian, "Jacobite" (with the patriarch in Mardin) and "Nestorian" churches. He initially deals with the governmental district of Anadoli. The archbishop of Nicomedia is called the noblest of the twelve archbishops and the highest-ranking after the patriarch, the one of Nicaea is ranked fifth, the one of Bursa eleventh, the one of Kyzikos – who was, however, in Constantinople – seventh. In Pergamon there were only few Christians with a church left, in Bursa also an Armenian archbishop and three Greek churches. In Sardes there was no church any more. In Smyrna there was a Greek Metropolitan with two churches and an Armenian archbishop with one. In Kushadasi there was a church with the archbishop of Ephesus living nextdoor. In Kolossae there were few Christians and there was no church. In Magnesia (Guzelhisar) there was an Armenian bishop. The archbishop of Ankyra was the primate of Galatia, additionally there were four Armenian unified and three non-unified churches with one archbishop. In Karahisar there was one Armenian metropolitan with two churches. In Pessinus, too, there was a Greek

35 Carsten Niebuhr: *Entdeckungen im Orient, 1761-1767* (1774), Stuttgart 1973, 258 and 269f.

36 *ibid.* 172.

metropolitan. In Sinope there was one metropolitan. In the governmental district of Karaman there was a Greek metropolitan in Konya, with one Greek and one Armenian church plus a Greek monastery. In the Kayseri district there was the metropolitan of Kayseri, the highest-ranking after the patriarch; there were three Armenian churches and a Greek one. In the case of Ürgüp the cave monasteries of Göreme are not mentioned. It is said about Tarsus that the Jacobites had had bishops and the Nestorians archbishops there. Sis in Kilikia was the seat of an Armenian patriarch. Germanikeia (Marasch) is called the former seat of a Jacobite bishop, Ainzerbeh as both a former Jacobite and Nestorian bishopric. Around Melitene (Malatya), Büsching maintains, there had formerly been seven Jacobite episcopal sees (Arca, Claudia, Gargar, Guba, Kalisura, Lacabin and Semcha). Now the governmental district of Sebaste follows. In Tokat (Pontus) – where in 1632 there had still been 12 churches and only in 1923 (!) all Armenians were deported – there was an Armenian archbishop with seven churches and a Greek church, and in Amasia a Greek metropolitan. On the island of Marmara – that was mainly Christian – there were six monasteries, two of them being dilapidated. On the island of Papadonisia there were two monasteries, on the island of Heybeli the St. George's Monastery, the seat of the metropolitan of Chalkedon (Kadiköy). The island of Alonia, too, was under the authority of a metropolitan. In the Trabzon governmental district there was a metropolitan, in Kerasonte, too; Büsching also mentions St. John's Monastery (the Vazelon monastery), which still remains today. In Kars there was an Armenian bishop, in Erzurum there were some 6,000 Armenians with an archbishop subordinate to the patriarch of Erivan and two churches plus 400 Greeks

with one bishop and a church. In Amida (Diyabakir) there was a Nestorian patriarch and a Jacobite bishop, in Saura a Jacobite bishop. In Seert there was a Nestorian metropolitan, in Mardin the Ananias monastery Deir al-Zafaran with the seat of the Jacobite patriarch. In Nisibis there were Nestorians, Jacobites and Armenians; earlier it had been the seat of both a Jacobite and a Nestorian bishop; likewise Dara as a former Jacobite episcopal see, Haran and Sarug (Serudsche). In Antiochia (Antakya) a few Greek and Armenian Christians shared two churches. The Christians of Aintab in Kommagene were Armenians that spoke Turkish. In Edessa (Urfa, Ruha) there was the seat of a Jacobite bishop. In the former Armenian patriarchal residence of Hromkla (Rumkale) on the Euphrates – previously the most eastern point of the Roman Empire - now already belonging to the Aleppo governmental district, there was just one church left. For the Minor Asian part of present-day Turkey that makes 17 Greek-Orthodox bishoprics (Nicomedia, Nicaea, Bursa, Kyzikos, Smyrna, Kushasai/Ephesus, Ankyra, Sinope, Pessinus, Konya, Kayseri, Amasia, Heybeli, Alonia, Trabzon, Kerasonte and Erzurum), 9 Armenian ones (Bursa, Smyrna, Magnesia, Karahisar, Ankyra, Sis, Tocat, Kars and Erzurum), 4 Jacobite ones (Amida, Saura, Mardin and Edessa) and two Nestorian ones (Amida and Seert), a total of 32 dioceses.³⁷

7. The Situation of the Christians in the Tanzimat Era from 1839 onward

The epoch from the peace treaty of Kütschük Kainardschi – which granted Russia the right to protect the Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire – until Abdulmecit's (1839-1861) handwritten letter of Nov. 3rd,

37 Anton Friedrich Büsching: *Neue Erdbeschreibung von Asien*, Schaffhausen 1769, passim.

1839, in which the hitherto discredited non-Muslims were acknowledged as equal Ottoman citizens, is a time of deep-rooted change; the achievements of the French Revolution (human rights, freedom of religion etc.) left their marks on the Ottoman Empire too, and offered the Christians an opportunity towards emancipation. The Greek struggle for freedom under General Alexander Ipsilantis from 1820 onward led to a severe pressure on the relationship. Patriarch Gregory V (1797-1798, 1806-1808 and 1818-1821), the founder of the second Greek printing office in Constantinople, was ordered by the Ottoman government to excommunicate Ipsilantis and to tell the Greeks to calm down.³⁸ At the end of March 1821 the sultan called for the Djeehad against the rebels in Moldavia and Morea (Peloponnese). Under the leadership of fanatic dervishes Muslim people marauded through Asia Minor and Constantinople, tortured and hanged prelates and archbishops, looted Greek churches and houses, burned them down and killed the Greeks, although the patriarch excommunicated nationalists. The Greeks in Constantinople were in mortal danger. Twelve metropolitans were killed, patriarch Gregory was deposed; when compromising letters from Ipsilantis were found in his house, he was murdered and his corpse thrown into the sea. When a Russian fleet was approaching Istanbul, the Catholic Armenians in the city were accused of being "Frankish" spies; more than 20,000 believers were driven out to Asia Minor in the winter cold together with their priests and notables. A Christian revolt in Ayvalik on the west coast of Anatolia in 1821 was due to the influence of the Greek independence movement "Philiké Hetaireia" and belongs into the

38 Nicolae Jorga: *Geschichte des Ottomanischen Reiches*, vol. 5 until 1912, ND Frankfurt 1990, 255f.

context of the Greek revolution.³⁹

In 1830 the Ottoman Empire had to acknowledge the independence of Greece. Only at the patriarchal synod of 1850, however, the autonomy of the Greek Church was acknowledged by the patriarchate. Pope Pius VIII urged France and Austria to insert an article into the peace treaty of Sept. 14th, 1829, guaranteeing religious freedom to the Catholic Armenians and the emancipation from the anti-Chalcedonean patriarchate. The Armenian Monophysites informed on their Catholic countrymen to the sultan for collaboration with France and the pope. As a consequence, the Catholic Armenians were forced to return under the authority of the Monophysite patriarch. France opposed this, put an end to the persecution of Catholics and forced the sultan to acknowledge a Catholic Armenian Millet in 1831. As early as on June 6th, 1830 the pope had founded an Armenian patriarchal seat in Constantinople.⁴⁰ Later, in 1850, the Protestant Armenians gained independence, too.

In the age of romanticism many intellectuals recalled the roots of European culture. This did not only led to a rediscovery of ancient oriental cultures, but also to increased missionary activity, above all by the Protestants, who did not want to leave the field to the Catholics alone. Thanks to these "voyages of discovery" many Syrian, Greek and Armenian manuscripts were rescued from destruction and taken to the large libraries of Europe.

Since 1820 English Presbyterians had begun missionary work in the Ottoman Empire. Within the Church of England the "Church Missionary Society"

39 James J. Reid: *Crisis of the Ottoman Empire. Prelude to Collapse 1839-1878*, Stuttgart 2000, 45.

40 Heyer (1973), 162

occupied itself with the Christians in the Orient. From 1821 onward the Rev. Henry Leeves acted as an agent of the British Bible Society in Constantinople.⁴¹ The Archbishop of Canterbury supported this work. At the end of 1833 a German-American group led by a pastor Schneider started its activities in Smyrna.

Full of romantic ideas of the "lost tribes of Israel" was the American missionary doctor Ashael Grant, who came to Urmia in 1835 and in 1839 stayed five weeks at Catholicos Shimun's XVII Abraham and enthused about restoring the "golden ages" of the medieval Nestorians. He also visited Nurallah, the Amir of Hakkari, who as a Kurd ruled over the local Christians like an independent prince, and Nurallah's nephew Sulayman Bey. In summer 1840 he met the Catholicos at Sulayman Bey's. He was convinced he had found the lost tribes of Israel and back in New York in 1841 published the book "The Assyrians or The Lost Tribes", which caused a sensation among contemporaries.⁴²

In 1837 the English geologist William Ainsworth together with the Chaldean Christian Isa Rasan travelled to the Hakkari area, where the east Syrian Catholicos Shimun XVII resided in Kotchannes, and explained his fear of Roman missionary attempts. There were neither Turkish troops nor taxes in the Hakkari area, the Syrians lived in a semi-autonomous Millet with the Catholicos as their head. After his return Ainsworth asked the "Royal Geographical Society" to organise an expedition into the area of the Syrian

41 J.F. Coakley: *The Church of England and the Church of the East. A History of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission*, Oxford 1992, 18f.

42 John Joseph: *The Modern Assyrians of the Middle East. Encounters with Western Missions, Archaeologists and Colonial Powers*, Leiden-Boston-Couicogne 2000, 72-75.

Christians. Rassam went to England and in Oxford made the acquaintance of the theologian William Palmer and the archbishop William Howley of Canterbury, who were taking up the cause of the Oriental Christians and tried to restrain the influence of papacy. In 1842 Ainsworth published his book "Travels and Researches in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea and Armenia". In 1843 the Anglican theologian George Percy Budger asked the English ambassador to urge the High Gate to acknowledge the Catholicos as head of the civilian government in Hakkari. During the Kurdish massacres under Badr Khan in 1843 – according to the Frenchman Cuinet – some 70,000 Christians were murdered in Turkey. Thanks to English commitment the European public's attention was drawn to the issue. As so often, antagonism between Catholics and Protestants was lived out at the expense of the Christians in the east.

In 1835 Budger came to Beirut and began his activities, which he described in his work "The Nestorians and their Rituals" in 1852. In 1844 he visited the territory of present-day Turkey; in Diyarbakir he points out the number of Armenians with 1,700 families, who had two churches, 30 priests and a bishop; the Jacobites amounted to 250 families and the unified Syrians.⁴³ In 1846 the Armenian patriarch Mateos excommunicated the Protestant Armenians.⁴⁴ In Mardin out of 2,780 families 1,500 were Muslim, 600 Jacobite, 500 unified Armenians, 120 unified Syrians and 60 Chaldeans. The Jacobites had two churches, the unified Armenians one church with a bishop and six priests, the unified Syrians one bishop and six priests with a monastery and the Chaldeans one church with one bishop and four priests. In Midiyat alone – where Syrian Christians

43 George Percy Budger: *The Nestorians and their Rituals*, vol.1 (1852), ND London 1987, 41.

44 Reid (2000), 206.

are but a minority nowadays – there were 450 Jacobite families. In Turabdin, too, Badr Khan had deported Christians in 1832. In Edessa Budger found – in addition to 12,000 Muslim families – 1,800 Armenian ones with 18 priests, and 200 families with six priests in the village of Garamoosh. The 180 Jacobite families had one bishop and two priests plus a school with 40-50 pupils. In the Armenian Sergius Church he visited the grave of Ephraim the Syrian.⁴⁵ From men like Budger the British government drew information about the Syrian Christians in the Ottoman Empire after the massacres of 1843.

A fundamental improvement of the situation of the Christians in Asia Minor was achieved when – after the defeat against Egypt on Nov.3rd, 1839 Sultan Abdulmecit I in the so-called "*Hatt-I Serif*" of *Gülhane* decreed that in future non-Muslims should get the citizenship of the Ottoman Empire, too. The fact that Christians and Jews were now acknowledged as equal Ottoman citizens should "at the same time deprive European powers to meddle with the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire on the pretext of wishing to protect their Christian fellow believers."⁴⁶ Thus the "Tanzimat" era began, a time of "wholesome reform". It did not mean a step toward parliamentarianism though; in principle the reform could be revoked at any time. As ever, the Ottoman Empire was a multinational state; apart from 19-20 million Muslims – only 2 million of them living in Europe – there were 2 million Greeks, 2.4 million Armenians and 6 million Serbs.⁴⁷

The heads of the religious groups were given new tasks; now Christians were also to be admitted into military service. The sultan's authority was not up to

45 Ibid. 49, 54 and 325.

46 Matuz (1990)

47 In 1851 about 250,000 Armenians lived in Constantinople.

much though: in Egypt the vizier Mohammed Ali had founded a more or less independent dynasty and in Mesopotamia the practically independent Emir Badr could massacre East Syrian Christians – an event later described by the popular writer Karl May in his novel "Durch das wilde Kurdistan" ("Through the wilderness of Kurdistan"). That some things had improved was also noticed by the French writer Nerval, concerning clothing regulations: "From the headgear...you must not conclude that Turkey is still a country of inequality like in the past. In the past you could recognize the belief of every inhabitant from his shoes ...today everything has changed: Each subject of the Empire is entitled to wear the almost European reform gear and the red fez."⁴⁸

At the beginning of the Crimean War the Russians invaded Armenia in June 1855. On March 16th the Christians had for the first time in the Ottoman Empire been granted the right to bear witness at court.⁴⁹ They now could also be conscripted for the imperial army. In February 1856 the sultan published a handwritten letter ("*Hatt-Hiimayun*") in which the rights of Christian minorities were emphasised: "They were not only granted unrestricted freedom of religion, they should also be eligible for all public posts in the future."⁵⁰ This included the regulation that the courts had to accept the testimony of Christians against Muslims, however, only in criminal procedures, not in civil court cases. What reality was like can be seen in the report of an English consul of 1858: "The victims of violence, provided they are locals, are afraid of reporting these occurrences to the Turkish authorities, because – in spite of the Hatt-I Hümayun ...

48 Gerard de Nerval: *Reise in den Orient*, Munich, w.y., 532.

49 Jorga V (1990), 478.

50 Matuz (1990), 230.

I know of no case in which the testimony of a Christian against a Muslim has been acknowledged by a criminal or civil court (medschlis)."⁵¹ Here a pattern becomes visible that has lost nothing of its validity up to the present: With a view to public opinion in Europe Turkey passes reform laws that are hardly enforced in reality.

The British general Fenwick Williams, who in 1855 had come to Kars to organize the defence against the Russians, described the Ottoman administrative system as unbearable tyranny unequalled throughout the world.⁵²

In article 7 of the Paris peace treaty of 1855 – after the end of the Crimean War – the intention of the sultan to establish equality for all his subjects irrespective of their religion or race – was put down in writing. On the one hand the dwindling of the Christian minority was slowed down through such measures, on the other Turkish nationalism triggered processes that finally resulted in the vanishing of the minority. In article 9 the European powers as protectors had secured themselves a right of intervention, which, however, prohibited any meddling with administrative affairs. In this way the powers – after the violence in the Lebanon (1860) and Crete (1868) – managed to enforce reforms that gave far-reaching autonomy to the Christians. After a civil war between the Christians and the Druses in the Lebanon the primarily Christian areas were granted the status of a Sandchak with a Christian governor. In Trabzon in 1858 there were riots against the Christians, who fled over the Russian border. According to the report of the British consul Taylor in Diyabakir suppressive measures resulted in many Christian families turning to the Latins and the French consulate for help. Some 1,400 families wanted to

51 Bat Ye'or (2002), 381.

52 Nassibian (1985), 15.

emigrate to Russian Armenia. In 1869 consul Taylor reported that within three years out of 106 Christian villages in the Erzurum Vilayet only 76 had remained.⁵³

In 1870 the monk Abdullah Sattuf Sadadi – the later patriarch Ignatius Abd Allah II (1906-1915) – wrote a document that was published by the historian Gabriel rabo of Hah in the Turabdin, according to which in 1870 there were in the Vilayet Diyarbakir alone 291 towns and villages inhabited by Syrians; the number of families, churches and priests are listed in this document.⁵⁴ This means that in the past 135 years 94% of the Syrian villages have been depopulated! Due to the plague of locusts and the drought some 5,000 Syrians from the Turabdin settled in present-day Syria as early as in the 1860ies. The German orientalist Eugen Prym and Albert Socin, who visited the Turabdin and Damascus in 1869 and 1870, left some important records about this to posterity.

Gradually the nationalist movement of "Ottomanism" developed; due to the laical conception of society there were polarisation and opposition against the value of solidarity laid down in the Umma. The reforms – meant to prevent the collapse of the empire – met with the harsh resistance of the Muslims. British investigations concerning the execution of the reforms give a very sober view of e.g. Christian participation in decision-making: "Christians are allowed to take part in local advisory assemblies, but, in comparison with the Muslims, there are so few of them that they are intimidated and consequently without any practical influence. They

53 Nassibian (1985), 15.

54 Gabriel Rabo: Die Gründung der Syrisch-Orthodoxen Kirche in der Diaspora. Talk, given at 26.5.2005 in turkish language at the syrian's Symposion of the Bilgi university at istanbul (manuscript), 10.

blindly put their seals on "mazbatas" (reports or decisions), which are written in Turkish – a language they are quite seldom able to read.⁵⁵ Theory and practice were gaping for still a long time to come.

The Millet system was secularised, but continued. More progressive Armenians demonstrated against notables and bankers in Constantinople in 1848. They pursued the systematic education of their children at elementary and grammar schools; thus Armenians on an average considerably surpassed the Turks educationally. A regulation of March 29th, 1863 established a kind of parliament with two houses (a religious and a civilian one) for the Armenians, whose Millet was promoted to the status of "*Milleti Saghida*", a "loyal nation". The patriarch in Istanbul was the community's official representative to the sultan. The parliament had 140 delegates, 20 of them religious representatives and 80 from Istanbul cycles of bankers. The deputies were elected from the group of male taxpayers. This parliament was the model for the first Turkish constitution of 1876. At that time the Armenians amounted to 4 million, two and a half of them living in Turkey.⁵⁶

The Ottoman dual legal system was based on equality and inequality. Now the opposition of the "Young Ottomans" was emerging. They were not prepared to give up Muslim superiority. "Throughout the 19th century there were assaults on and Muslim upheavals against the Christians."⁵⁷ The Armenian National Assembly until 1878 was restricted to denouncing social injustices, reprisals and Kurdish assaults. The bishop, patriarch and later

55 Bat Ye'or (2002), 389.

56 Yves Ternon: *Tabu Armenien. Geschichte eines Völkermords*. Frankfurt-Berlin 1977, 37.

57 *Ibid.*, 22f.

Catholicos Mekertisch Khrimjan additionally had Armenian newspapers published, like e.g. "Ardzvi Vaspurakan" ("The Eagle of Vaspurakan"). In view of their social position Armenians were often compared to the Jews by travellers from abroad. The writer Jakob Meli-Hakobian called for a holy war in the name of freedom and the native country.

Spearheaded by teachers, priests and writers, Armenian nationalism had been developing since 1863, later becoming the butt of "Young Turkish" hostility. The opposition was backed by the Constantinople lodge "Haik", the branch of an English lodge, whose publications were permitted to circulate freely due to Britain's status as a protective power. The "Ser" lodge – supported by France – was especially looking after the Armenians in Kilikia. In the newspaper "Hiussiss" ("North"), which was published in Russia, the Armenians of Persia were exhorted to participate in the building up of a Kilikia that would possibly be independent later.

From the Balkan and Caucasian regions conquered by the Christian states from Turkey, Muslim Tcherkessians, Abchasians, Chechnyans and Ajarians fled to Armenian settlement areas in the eastern provinces, which altered the ethnic system. The despotic new sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) stirred up the Kurds against the Armenians. The Kurds were nomads; the Armenians and the Syrians in Turabdin had to pay tribute to the Kurdish Agas ("Counts"). Especially in winter, the Kurds looted Christian villages; assaults, robbery and murder have remained "normal occurrences" in East Anatolia up to the present. After the upheaval of the Christian farmers in Herzegovina (1875), in spring a revolt broke out in Bulgaria, and Serbia declared war. Prior to a conference of ambassadors, Sultan Abdul Hamid declared the

abolishment of absolutism and the introduction of a parliamentary system.

The new Basic Law of Dec. 23rd, 1876 proclaimed Islam as the state religion, yet guaranteed freedom of religion. Christians and Jews as equal citizens would be able to fill public posts, provided they had a good command of Turkish. From the two chambers, the House of Representatives was to be elected, the Senate to be appointed by the sultan. Direct election was only intended in large cities; all religious denominations were to be represented in parliament. The constitution, however, could not guarantee equality, as article 11 confirmed the religious privileges of the Millets and Islam as the state religion.⁵⁸

After the revolts in Bulgaria the great powers demanded the establishment of two autonomous provinces with freely elected parliaments, whose head would be a Christian "Wali" (provincial governor). The London protocol of March 31st, 1877 grants the signatory powers a right of intervention should the reforms not be put into practice to a sufficient degree. When the Gate refused to sign this, Russia declared war in April 1877. The Armenians demanded better treatment of their nation. When - under the leadership of the Armenian general Mikajel T. Loris-Melikoff – the Russians marched in, they were received by the Armenians with sympathy, which eventually led to Muslim acts of retaliation. Later on, 40,000 Armenian families emigrated to Russia. Soon Adrianopolis (Edirne) fell, and the allied forces stood in San Stefano at the outskirts of Constantinople. Armenian officers had a large share in the Russian victory. On Oct. 21st, 1877 the Armenian National Council in a petition to

58 Taner Akcam: *Armenien und der Völkermord. Die Konstantinopeler Prozesse und die türkische Nationalbewegung*, 1996, 21.

the tsar demanded Russia not to return the conquered territory to the Turks. Not in any event should the Russian troops leave the country before reforms had been carried out and the Armenians would have access to state affairs. It was the first time that the Armenian "Great Council" officially opposed the Turkish government.⁵⁹ After the ceasefire of Jan. 19th, 1878 Patriarch Nerses once more explained the main points of Armenian criticism to Tsar Alexander II and the Russian chief commanders and asked them for help. In the treaty of San Stefano in March 1878 the Gate had to agree to a dictated peace, which resulted in the loss of almost all European possessions. Russian units were to stay in the Armenian areas until the execution of the reforms. In article 16 the Russians demanded self-government for the Armenian territories, which was refused by the Turks. The article only laid down the general obligation of the Turks to carry out reforms. It also included the obligation of the Turks to establish autonomy in the Armenian areas. Until the completion of the reforms Russian troops were to remain stationed in Erzurum. Six Armenian provinces in Anatolia from Kilikia to Erzurum were to be evacuated. Eventually the Armenians demanded an Armenian governor for the eastern provinces; Armenian judges should pronounce verdicts in line with western law instead of the Sharia. Police forces should be mainly Armenian.

After Great Britain, which concluded a secret defence agreement with the Turks – and Austria-Hungary opposed Russia, the German imperial chancellor Bismarck mediated at the Congress of Berlin on July 13th, 1878. The Ottoman Empire was represented by a Greek,

59 Artem Ohandjanian: Armenien. Der verschwiegene Völkermord, Vienna, Coulogne, Graz 1989, 22.

Alexander Karotodi, who negotiated with Disraeli, Salisbury, Andrassy and Bismarck.⁶⁰ The Armenians were also represented with a delegation of their own, which in vain demanded a Christian governor for the Armenian regions and other concessions.⁶¹ Bismarck mediated a peace treaty under which Serbia, Montenegro and Romania, which had hitherto belonged to the Ottoman Empire, seceded from it and became independent. Bulgaria under Ferdinand I of Saxony-Gotha became a tributary principality, Thessaly and Epirus fell to Greece, the area of Kars to Russia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina became an Austrian protectorate. In article 61 the Gate conceded that reforms in the Armenian provinces and the safety of Armenians from Kurds and Tcherkessians in Turkey should be supervised.⁶² In this way the Armenian issue was – in theory – internationalised. The British foreign minister Lord Salisbury remarked on this that he neither believed in reforms of Turkey, nor in an efficient protection of the Christians; his sole object had been to prevent Russia from occupying Armenia by all means.⁶³ As a "reward" for its support England received the island of Cyprus from the sultan. When the Russian troops under general Loris-Melikoff withdrew from the eastern provinces of Turkey, thousands of intimidated Armenian farmers followed them. The patriarch, however, took an oath of allegiance to Sultan Abdul Hamid and emphasised that all efforts to solve the Armenian issue would be taken within the Turkish borders.⁶⁴ The

60 Roderick H. Davison, *The Ottoman Empire at the Congress of Berlin*, in: *Die Politik der Großmächte und das Problem der Modernisierung in Südosteuropa in der 2. Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Wiesbaden 1982, 205-223, here: 212f.

61 M.S. Anderson: *The Eastern Question 174-1923. A Study in International Relations*, London 1978, 254.

62 Matuz (1990), 239.

63 Ohandjanian (1989), 27.

fundamental problems of the Christians in Turkey, however, were not solved at the Congress of Berlin either. "Turkey continued to ill-treat those Christian subjects that had been left to her."⁶⁵

In February 1878 Sultan Abdul Hamid had dissolved the parliament that shortly before had assembled for the first time; he said to the German ambassador that he would in no case give way to Armenian pressure. He directed Muslims flooding back from newly independent regions mainly into Armenian areas. The Armenians, who had taken part in the Congress of Berlin, were left empty-handed. According to records of the Armenian patriarchate, 1.33 million Armenians lived in the Armenian eastern provinces at that time and were mostly in the majority there.⁶⁶ The consulates established by France, Great Britain and Russia in Harput, Erzurum and Van from now on were able to report Turkish assaults to their governments. In 1880 940 Armenians from Van turned to the British captain Emilius Clayton for help; vice-consul William Evrett wrote that conditions in the Vilayet of Erzurum had never been as unsafe as then. Influential Armenians told Captain Clayton that people said it was better to die than to live under such catastrophical circumstances.⁶⁷

64 Richard G. Hovannisian: *Die armenische Frage (1878-1913)*, in: *Das Verbrechen des Schweigens*, ed. by Tessa Hofmann, (Pogrom Paperbacks 1012), Göttingen w.y., 13-37, here 18.

65 André Maurois: *The Geschichte Englands*, Vienna-Leipzig 1937, 544.

66 Wolfgang Gust: *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern*, Munich-Vienna 1993, 106f. and Jacob Künzler: *Im Lande des Blutes und der Tränen. Erlebnisse in Mesopotamien während des Weltkrieges (1914-1918)*, 2nd ed., Zurich 2004, 89.

67 Nassibian (1985), 18.

After the Congress of Berlin the first Armenian parties came into being. As early as in 1872 the Armenians had founded a "Union of Welfare" in Van, the first revolutionary Armenian society. The secret society "Black Cross" – founded in 1878 – pledged itself to protect their unarmed country people. In 1885 the Armenakan Party, which demanded autonomy, was founded in Van. In 1887 the "Huntschak" (Armenian Revolutionary Federation) was founded in Tbilisi. It had a Marxist ideology and stood for the independency of Turkish Armenia.

The sultan encouraged the Muslims to assault Armenians. In 1891 the "Hamidiye Regiments" were founded, meant to suppress the Armenian population. In the same year the Armenian Catholicos – a friend of the Turks – complained about Kurdish assaults tolerated by the authorities. In Erzurum there was street fighting; the Armenians in Constantinople asked the patriarch to claim Armenian privileges in a more energetic tone. They also wanted to more energetically direct the attention of the Europeans to their problems. The revolutionaries by means of letters from Leipzig and Paris also turned to the Syrian Christians and the Kurds. The third political party "Dashnakiansutiun" ("Federation") primarily operated from Russian Armenia. Plans were made to end the Turkish rule over the Armenians. In 1889 Sultan Abdul Hamid confessed to a Hungarian Turkologist he would "bring the Armenians up to scratch". The Great Vizier Isset Pasha in this context for the first time spoke of the solution of the Armenian issue that would consist in the annihilation of the nation.⁶⁸ In 1890 a member of the Hintchakians in Constantinople forced Patriarch Choren Aschekian to hand a letter of protest to the sultan after a demonstration on the Kum Kapu. The British

68 Gust (1993), 97.

ambassador commented on this, saying for the first time since 1453 Christians had offered resistance to the Turkish army in the capital. In Russia, too, the Armenians suffered from a policy of Russification. In September 1890 the Russian foreign minister Giers told a German diplomat, Russia did not wish for a second Bulgaria in the shape of an autonomous Russian principality.⁶⁹

In 1893 the first fights broke out in Anatolia, when Armenians refused to pay taxes and the Kurds burned down 30 villages and massacred the population. Armenian bishops were arrested, the patriarch resigned his office. In 1894/96 the first systematic massacres happened, with about 300,000 Armenian victims in Trabzon, Samsun and in the cities of Mesopotamia, like Mardin and Edessa. In Sassun near Erzurum there was an Armenian uprising in 1894; thousands of Armenians were slaughtered, which led to protests from European missionaries and consuls. In May 1894 the European envoys demanded a new regiment for the Armenian provinces. The great powers Russia, France and Great Britain asked Abdul Hamid II to intervene and in May 1895 presented a reform project to him, which called for the unification of Armenian provinces in one singular administrative area. After some alterations it was signed by the sultan on Oct.17th, 1895. On Sept.24th, 1895 the Armenian patriarch Mateos in a letter to the ambassadors of the great powers demanded to put the reform projects in the Armenian provinces under European control. The German ambassador Marschal, who had the concession for the building of the Baghdad railway on behalf of Germany, declared that no reforms were necessary in Armenia. At the same time the great powers were also discussing a partition of the Ottoman Empire. The

69 Anderson (1978), 254.

German ambassador Hatzfeld held talks with the British Prime Minister Salisbury in London. During a meeting of Nicholas II with Queen Victoria at Balmoral Castle, Salisbury remarked that the great powers should intervene and depose Abdul Hamid if he refused reforms.⁷⁰ German Emperor William II also spoke in favour of deposing the sultan. On Sept.30th, 1895 the Armenians demanded the appointment of a general governor approved by Europe. In October 1895 the government promised the appointment of Christian vice-governors, a control commission in contact with the embassies and of Christian officials and law inspectors; additionally, Kurdish migration would be restricted. At a Russian crown council in Zareskoje Selo on Dec.5th, 1896 even an occupation of Constantinople was discussed. Russia did not, however, wish to take any moves without its ally France.

8. The Massacres of 1895/96 and the Beginnings of the "Young Turks"

According to records of the Armenian patriarchate, approximately 2.1 million Armenians lived in the Ottoman Empire in 1895; in the six Armenian provinces there were 38.9% of them, about 24.4% Turks and 16.3% Kurds.⁷¹ The latter soon were facing a dangerous opponent in Turkey. At the military medical academy in Constantinople as early as in 1889 a political secret committee for "Unity and Progress" (Ittihat ve Terakki), in French "Comité Union et Progrès" had been founded,

70 Alan Palmer: *Glanz und Niedergang der Diplomatie. Die geheime Politik der europäischen Kanzleien vom Wiener Kongress bis zum Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkrieges*, Düsseldorf 1986, 315 and Paul M.

71 Kennedy: *The Realities behind Diplomacy: Background Influences on British External Policy 1865-1980*, London-Boston-Sydney 1981, 106f.

from which later the Young Turks Movement was to emerge, which wanted to change the Ottoman Empire into a Turkish national state. During an Armenian demonstration in Constantinople in 1895 there were clashes with the police; stirred up Turkish counter demonstrators murdered numerous Armenians. Abdul Hamid dissolved the "Ittihat" movement, which in view of the massacres had verbally sided with the Armenians, and promised administrative reform in the Armenian provinces. Initially the "Young Turks" had even planned to employ Christians for the reorganisation of the empire.

In addition to the fanatical population, officials and the military participated in the atrocities, too. In Trabzon alone more than 1,000 people were killed. As a consequence, thousands of Armenians emigrated to the USA or Russia. The 1895 massacres of Christians in the Ottoman Empire happened in many places. In Edessa (today Sanliurfa), where of 60,000 inhabitants 13,000 were Armenians, Muslims prayed surahs from the Koran, before slaughtering the Armenians, whose hands and feet were tied. During the massacre that the American missionary Corinna Shattuck witnessed and called "Holocaust", 1200-3000 men fell victim to carnage on Christmas day. Afterwards, 3000 Armenians – sprayed with kerosene – were burned in the large city church. Jews had to fulfil the macabre task of taking the corpses to mass graves outside the town.⁷² In all, 646 villages were islamised by force, 328 churches turned into mosques and 77 monasteries destroyed.⁷³ The massacres raised a storm of protest in most parts of Europe. On Nov. 11th, 1895 the German emperor William II, too, expressed his indignation

72 Gust (1993), 11.

73 Ibid., 106f.

about them. The German government had already been informed that 8,000 persons had been murdered before the very eyes of the Turkish police.⁷⁴ "One did not believe in the honest will to seriously protect the Christian population in the Armenian provinces." On Oct. 8th, 1895 the Austrian ambassador also reported massacres of Greeks in Trabzon; the German ambassador von Saurma told the imperial government about the slaughters in Erzurum. The Russians once more pondered a partition of Turkey that would gain them Constantinople. The German ambassador Hatzfeld reported such "partition plans" of British Prime Minister Salisbury to Berlin. After the murders of Armenians in Trabzon of Oct. 8th, 1895, the emperor William II practically held the English responsible for the riots.⁷⁵ For politics at large, the Armenian plight often was but a means of pursuing one's own goals at the Armenians' expense.

A special case was the Armenian city of Zaytun (today Süleymanli) in the Taurus, which had enjoyed the privilege of complete tax exemption since 1618 and had successfully resisted an army of 25,000 men in 1862.⁷⁶ In Paris at that time a priest had handed a report of the occurrences to Emperor Napoleon III, asking him to use his influence in favour of an improvement of the conditions. The emperor discussed the matter with Sultan Abdul Aziz, who was on a state visit to France. After his return, the sultan launched a punitive campaign with 150,000 troops against Zaytun, where a

74 Die diplomatischen Akten des Auswärtigen Amtes, ed. By Bernhard Schwertfeger, vol. 2: 1890-99, Berlin 1924, 152f.

75 Cf. Botschafter Graf Paul von Hatzfeld: Nachgelassene Papiere 1838-1901, ed. by Gerhard Ebel, vol. 2 (=Deutsche Geschichtsquellen des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts 51/2), Boppard 1976, 1055f., nr.656.

76 Gust (1993), 79.

revolt had broken out.⁷⁷ In October 1895 the Armenians took the Turkish garrison in Zaytun by surprise and put 500 soldiers into prison. 50,000 Turks, Kurds and Tcherkessians besieged the city, which was defended by 2,000 Armenians, the western powers interfered. On Feb. 10th, 1896 the treaty of amnesty was signed, which saved the lives of 30,000 Armenians. Emperor William II's marginal note to the report on Zaytun is typical: "I fear it's all empty phrases. As soon as our delegates will have left, they are going to kill all."⁷⁸

The German government – allied with Turkey in World War One – knew as well as the British, Austrian and Russian cabinets what was going on in the Ottoman Empire. The French spoke of 36,085 dead Armenians, the British of 88,243, but the Armenian patriarchate of 300,000, other reports of 100,000 to 200,000.⁷⁹ This figure was mentioned by the writer Anatole France, too. The inhabitants of 646 villages had converted to Islam to avoid being massacred. The British found out that 328 churches had been turned into mosques and a further 568 churches and 77 monasteries had been destroyed.⁸⁰

After the 1895 massacres the German Protestant parson Johannes Lepsius travelled to Constantinople and Ankara by rail, and from there deeper into the interior of the country on horseback to get an idea of the circumstances; later he became one of the most important

77 Elisabeth Bauer: *Armenien*, Lucerne 1977, 147f. and Reid (2000), 45f.

78 *Die große Politik der europäischen Kabinette 1871-1914*, vol. 10, Berlin 1927 (*Das türkische Problem 1895*), 135, nr. 2487 (April 4th, 1896).

79 Nassibian (1985) speaks of 200-250,000 dead.

80 *Die große Politik X* (1907), 107.

champions for the Armenians in Germany. He arranged the admission of more than 100 Armenian orphans into an American orphanage in Edessa. For that purpose he had a carpet manufacture established in Edessa. In 1899 he travelled to Turkey again and tried to build up an Islamic mission, which met with strong resistance in Turkey.

Encroachments upon Christians in Turkey were continuing in 1896; in June the major part of the Armenian quarter of Van was destroyed and 10,000 Armenians were killed and another 20,000 slaughtered by the Kurds in the surroundings. In Edessa (Urfa) there were massacres, too. After the patriarch Izmirlian had been forced to step down the Armenians wanted to occupy and destroy the Ottoman Bank in Constantinople on August 26th, 1896. On August 27th and 28th Armenian nationals were executed; "it simply was permitted to knock down any Armenian found in the street."⁸¹ In vain the Armenian patriarch assured the sultan of his people's loyalty. Within about 48 hours 12,000 Armenians had been murdered. The German embassy spoke of 5,000 dead; in all, an estimated 6,000-14,000 Armenians were killed, 80,000 to 100,000 sought refuge abroad. The reports of the German and Austrian envoys make it clear that the governments were informed, but contented themselves with protests that did not get them anywhere. In contrast to Turks and Kurds, Armenians were forbidden to carry arms and to obey Turkish dress regulations. In the massacres of 1895/96 100.000 Armenians were killed, 2,000 villages annihilated and hundreds of monasteries and churches destroyed or turned into mosques.⁸²

81 Jorga V (1990), 612.

82 Ohandjanian (1989), 36.

How much the intellectual world was preoccupied with the Armenian issue can be inferred from letters and diaries of Theodor Herzl, who was in Constantinople in June 1896 to win Sultan Abdul Hamid's support for his project of a Jewish state. He thought that "it was inappropriate to continue the work of colonization in Palestine, before the Zionist movement had been given a 'charter' by the Turks, which is to say an official document conferring self-government in Palestine on it."⁸³ At the beginning he mentions his friend Newlinski's belief that for the sultan the only rescue possible consisted in an alliance with the Young Turks, who had good contacts to the Armenians. After a conversation with the Austrian ambassador Calice he noted: "He represents the Armenian issue in a considerably different manner than the Turks, who are always forging the facts. Now they naturally don't want any foreign intervention. They are going to arrange everything by themselves, reforms etc. But as soon as the plight is over, they don't think of it any more."⁸⁴ In a letter to a friend in Paris on May 11th he declares it important to support the sultan in the Armenian question to win his favour. The Armenians, he says, are planning to strike again in July. Pressure would have to be put on the Armenian committees in Brussels, Paris and London to make them unconditionally surrender to the sultan, who would be able to save his face and then grant reforms to them. In this context – via his English contacts – Herzl also wanted to influence Prime Minister Salisbury, who should "press" the Armenians.

83 Wurmbrand-Roth (1989), 430.

84 Theodor Herzl: *Zionistes Tagebuch 1895-1899*, ed. by Johannes Wachten and Chaya Harel (=Briefe und Tagebücher 2), Berlin, Frankfurt 1983, 380f.

"In no case must they know we want to use them for establishing the independent Jewish state, else they would perhaps try the same thing on this occasion, and we would really have one more problem that way." According to Herzl, a loan would be necessary to compensate the damages caused by the Armenian revolt; a group of bankers, he says, will be prepared to do this, if the Armenians agree to an armistice.⁸⁵ Herzl did not reach his goal in his lifetime; he was in the same way filled with the idea of a national state as the leaders of the Armenian parties (Dashnakians and Hintchakians). His endeavours to obtain the "charter" from the sultan remained without success.

In the Greek-Turkish war (1895/96), which was caused by revolts in Crete, Turkey held the ground, but had to acknowledge the autonomy of the island. In 1898 the German emperor William II travelled to Constantinople, accompanied by the Protestant thinker Friedrich Naumann. Bernhard von Bülow, the state secretary in the foreign ministry and later imperial chancellor, reports about his audience: "Sultan Abdul Hamid didn't make an elevating impression during the long audience he granted to me. Although for the world public he – probably with good reason - figured as the "slaughterer of the Armenians", he looked more Armenian than Turkish, stooping, shifty, shy and bent."⁸⁶ You knew who you were dealing with. From Constantinople the journey continued to Smyrna and Jerusalem, where the Germans had built the Protestant Church of Redemption and William II was welcomed

85 Theodor Herzl: Briefe von Anfang mai bis Anfang Dezember 1898, ed. by Barbara Schäfer (=Briefe und Tagebücher 4), Frankfurt-Berlin 1990, 101.

86 Bernhard Count of Bülow: Memorabilia, Berlin 1930, 249.

by Theodor Herzl. As early as in 1888/90 the contracts for the building of the Baghdad railway had been signed, which would give Germany great influence in the Ottoman Empire and would lead to Russia's disgruntlement.⁸⁷

When new arrests and killings of Armenians ensued in 1900, the Armenian patriarch asked the Austrian ambassador Calice to intervene at the sultan. In 1902 the first congress of Ottoman liberals met in Paris, with Armenian, Greek and Jewish intellectuals participating. In a new assault of the Hamidiye militias and the Kurds against Sassun in April 1904 most of the 3,000 Armenians of Sassun were killed. After a bomb attack against the sultan on June 1st, 1905 the Daschnak Party published a manifesto to the signatory powers of the Congress of Berlin, demanding freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, equality of all nationalities at court and the establishment of permanent European control.⁸⁸ In July 1906 the Hintchakians negotiated with the Young Turks about an alliance, which, didn't come off though, because no agreement on reforms was reached. In 1907 the Young Turks, however, concluded a cooperation agreement with the Dashnakians.

For the first time these events were taken notice of in the German-speaking world. A group of personalities like Johannes Lepsius thought about how to put an end to such atrocities. In Great Britain, too, there were manifestations of solidarity with public events and information campaigns, in which free masons, socialists and Jews participated. The massacres of 1895 were one

87 Hans Rall: Wilhelm II. Eine Biographie, Graz-Vienna-Cologne 1995, 250.

88 Ohandjanian (1989), 35.

of the reasons why in the same year the German Protestant parson Johannes Lepsius founded the "German Oriental Mission", which established orphanages with clinics and pharmacies in Armenia. He created transnational humanitarian networks, built up schools and hospitals in Kayseri and Edessa. In his article "*Armenien und Europa. Eine Anklageschrift gegen die christlichen Großmächte und ein Aufruf an das christliche Deutschland*". (*Armenia and Europe. A Bill of Indictment against the Christian Great Powers and a Call to Christian Germany*) (1896) he appealed to the European states to come to the rescue of the Armenians. While England and Switzerland were very active for the Armenians, German propagandists represented Armenians as a "degenerate race" and as "the Jews of the Orient". In 1896 Edessa became a centre of Lepsius' activities. In 1889 the physician Hermann Christ from Basle came to Edessa, a year later Jakob Künzler – hired by Lepsius – came to work and assist innumerable Armenians and Greeks. The medical doctor Josephine Züricher from Zurich founded the Swiss hospital", which was to remain a part of the "German Oriental Mission" until the end of World War One. German diplomacy, on the other hand, "refused any protection of country people who occupied themselves with the politically sensitive Armenian issue and travelled through Ottoman eastern provinces."⁸⁹

The opposition against Abdul Hamid's regime was split in two groups: the liberals, who stood for decentralisation and cooperation, and the nationalists. In July 1907 the "Young Turks" agreed on the programme of a constitutional monarchy. In July 1908 the sultan put the 1876 constitution into force again. In 1908 Bulgaria declared its independence and Austria-Hungary annexed

89 Künzler (2004), 12.

Bosnia-Herzegovina. On March 3rd the revolution of the Young Turks broke out in Thessalonica, on July 24th, the sultan granted a constitution. Prisons were opened and the population streamed to the mass graves of 1896. The Young Turks marched into Constantinople, deposed the sultan and proclaimed his brother Mehmed V (1909-1918) as his successor. The new sultan, however, was without influence. Initially the Young Turks (unionists) were still allied with the Armenians. The Armenian Daschnakian Party was legalized and the revolutionaries seen as heroes of freedom. In 1907 the party was even admitted into the Socialist International movement. The Armenian patriarch Mateos Izmirlian told a member of the British embassy he was convinced the only possible way for Armenians was to ally themselves with the Young Turks.⁹⁰ The Young Turks at first distanced themselves from the 1895 massacres, which now the former government was blamed for. In July 1908 the Young Turks partly seized power in the state. An electoral coalition of the CUP with the Armenian Daschnak Party also intended to return Armenian possessions that had fallen into the hands of Kurds and other Muslims during the 1895 massacres. When nothing was done in this affair and the CUP withdrew this promise in 1913, the political leaders of the Armenians again turned to the international public carry out the reforms in accordance with the Berlin agreement of 1878. Within the CUP itself at the party congress of 1911 the programme of Islamification and Turkification of the empire prevailed. It was to be executed by force.

In the new parliament of December 1908 the CUP had a majority, but did not govern on its own. In April 1909, however, it came to an uprising of the CUP's opponents, in the course of which Abdul Hamid tried to regain

90 Nassibian (1985), 21.

power. Some leaders of the Young Turks like Halil Bey hid in Armenian houses. The revolt was, however, put down by the army after two weeks. The pogrom of Christians in the Kilikian Adana area in April 1909, in which 15-20,000 Armenians lost their lives, were ended by the unionists.⁹¹ On April 18th, 1909 an Armenian deputation protested to the government against the slaughters in Tarsus, Antiochia and Adana. Although Young Turks had been involved in them, there were still ceremonies in commemoration of the Muslim and Christian victims. On April 27th the Young Turks seized power again. They sent troops to Adana to put an end to the murders. A total of 30,000 Armenians had fallen victim to the massacres.⁹² Only through the Adana massacres Armenian suspicions grew that it was a mistake to expect anything of the "Young Turkish Revolution".

Violence against Christians continued. On September 9th, 1912 the Austrian consul in Trabzon reported to Vienna: "Up to now, the Armenians – expecting to be rewarded for their services - have supported the Young Turks, to whom they owe the liberation from Abdul Hamid's terrible tyranny and the constant persecutions and tortures under this tyrant. The Adana carnages and the more and more frequent Kurdish assaults, however, have taught them they must be on their guard under a constitutional government, too."⁹³ In the Van area the Dashnakians helped Armenian farmers that had been deprived of house and home by the Kurds and their Agas.

Gradually the movement of "*Unity and Progress*" (*Ittihat*) caught on with the Young Turks, who ruled

91 Ibid., 14.

92 Ohandjanian (1989), 44.

93 Ibid., 47.

absolutely from 1913 onward. In October 1912 the Catholicos George V, who resided in Edschmiadzin, spoke out in favour of a Russian intervention for the Turkish Armenians. As early as at the beginning of the year he had sent an envoy to the great powers to demand the execution of the reforms granted in the Berlin contract. On December 26th, 1912 the Russian government demanded the government to carry out the reforms promised in 1878. On December 31st the Austrian ambassador reported that only under exterior pressure Turkey would execute the reforms promised a long time ago. On January 11th, 1913 the Austrian ambassador in St. Petersburg reported about a conversation with foreign minister Sergej Sasonow: Russia would not "be unfaithful to its mission as a protector of the Christians in the Orient...and could on no condition tolerate repetitions of Armenian massacres."⁹⁴

In May 1913 the great powers negotiated about the Armenian issue. The Armenian patriarch Patriarch John XII Archarouni handed a memorandum about the bad situation of the Armenians to the grand vizier on December 5th, 1913. In June Russia proposed a conference of the ambassadors. Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy wished to have a say there, too. Germany and England wanted to preserve Turkey. On June 1st the Russian ambassador presented a reform paper to the other representatives of the great powers. At the same time, the Armenian archbishop Hmayak handed two memoranda to the Austrian ambassador Pallavicini: one concerning the emigration of Armenians from Turkey that had reached an all-time high in 1913, and one with the demand to unite all Armenian provinces, to accept Armenian as a court language and about the appointment

94 Ibid., 50.

of a governor with the consent of the great powers.⁹⁵ Aknuni, the leader of the Dashnakian party, met the Austrian consul Stummvoll in Smyrna in August 1913, and explained the importance of European control to him. At the same time Armenian intellectuals like Boghos Nubar turned to the "Times" and the British government, demanding legal certainty and administrative reforms. It was characteristic that in Constantinople in 1913 out of 1.25 million inhabitants - with 500,000 of them being non-Muslims - less than one percent of the gendarmes and policemen were non-Muslim.⁹⁶ In December 1913 the Archbishop of Canterbury warned the British foreign minister Grey of a massacre and inquired what the government intended to do about it.⁹⁷

The German government in this situation remembered Johannes Lepsius, who was to work on the Armenian leaders. He succeeded in dissuading the Armenians from their Russian plans. The powers were to be granted influence in the choice of general inspectors. Through Lepsius the Armenian action committee wanted to enter into negotiations with the Turkish government.⁹⁸ At the beginning of August 1913 the conference of ambassadors ended its work. Russian proposals were considerably watered down. The German ambassador Wangenheim and the Russian ambassador Giers proposed the result of the negotiations, which intended two general inspectors from neutral countries - to the great vizier. On February 8th the reform package - designed to establish two provinces with one foreign general inspector from a neutral country - was signed by the Turks and the Russians.⁹⁹ The Austrian

95 *Ibid.*, 57f.

96 Nassibian (1985), 23f.

97 *Ibid.*, 30.

98 Ohandjanian (1969), 59f.

99 Gust (1993), 154f.

ambassador Pallavicini reported on this to Vienna: "The far most important postulate of the Russian project, the demand of a control of the reform work through the powers, has not been accepted by the Gate, and thus the reform work is destined to share the fate of all reform efforts in Turkey."¹⁰⁰ Eventually the Dutchman Westenenk was appointed for the districts of Trabzon, Erzurum and Sivas, and the Norwegian major Hoff for the districts of Van, Diyarbakir, Bitlis and Kharput. They would, however, not start their missions any more.

At the end of 1913 the extreme rightist Young Turkish triumvirate of interior minister Talaat Pasha, Cemal and war minister Enver was already governing. Since 1913 the CUP and especially war minister Enver had been propagating a pan-Turkism that was to comprise all Turkish nations as far as Mongolia. Russia was the chief enemy for "Turkism". At the end of 1913 the special unit "Teskilat-I Mahsusa", was founded. It was meant to execute the "Turkification" of Asia Minor. Since the spring of 1914 the aim of the "liquidation of non-Turkish centres of settlement in strategically important positions" had been propagated in secret meetings of the CUP's central committee.¹⁰¹ Celal Bayar – the later Turkish president – as the CUP's general secretary organized "ethnic cleansings" in Smyrna in the spring of 1913. According to his own declarations terror gangs from the Smyrna neighbourhood drove away 130,000 Orthodox Greeks to Greece. The economic elimination of the Greeks and Armenians through boycott measures in the Aegean and in Thracia was the prelude to the forthcoming pogroms.

100 Ohandjanian (1969), 65.

101 Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dominik Schaller: *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah*, 2nd ed., Zurich 2003, 19.

More than a quarter of the inhabitants of Asia Minor were Christians at that time. Esred Kuscubasi, the leader of the special unit "Teskilat-I Mahusa" spoke of 1.5 million exiles just in 1914!¹⁰² The outbreak of World War One therefore suited the Young Turks very fine; Ziya Gökalp, one of the CUP's intellectual pioneers, at the beginning of the war called for the destruction of Russia. The Turkish government's tax collecting policy drove many Armenians into exile; around 1908 the proportion of the Armenian population in Van had fallen from 64% to less than 50%.¹⁰³ After a failed counter putsch of supporters of the sultan the Young Turks declared the state of siege and suspended constitutional rights. "During that time the ideas of Turkism and extreme National Socialism were gaining support among several leading Young Turks."¹⁰⁴

Shortly after the outbreak of World War One the administrative reform of the eastern provinces agreed with the European powers was cancelled. The general inspectors Hoff and Westenenk that had meanwhile arrived in Turkey were served with a deportation in August 1914. On August 2nd, 1914 the Young Turkish government entered into an alliance with the German Empire, which planned the entry of Turkey into the war against Russia. Enver Pasha, one of the leaders of the Young Turks, began his campaign against Russia, which turned into a military disaster. The two general inspectors Hoff and Westenenk returned to their home countries after the start of the war. Now the Turkish government didn't need to pay any heed to the western powers. Thus the Ittihat (CUP) could put its plan to annihilate the

102 *Ibd.*, 21.

103 Gust (1993), 121.

104 Hovannisian, w.y., 21.

Armenian people into practice. They could rest assured of the support of German policy; Austria-Hungary contented itself with occasional protests.

9. The massacres of Christians in World War One

Before the beginning of the World War it lay in the interest of England to preserve Turkey as a bulwark against Russia. Germany, which since the 1880ies had economically invested a lot of money in the Ottoman Empire, e.g. for of the building of the Baghdad railway, was the only country that had an interest to keep up a strong Turkey as an ally against the "Entente Cordiale", by which it was encircled together with Austria-Hungary. Both sides at first sought the favour of the Turkish government. As early as in 1914 - at a meeting of the German-Asian Society - the German marshal Goltz suggested resettling the Armenians in Mesopotamia.¹⁰⁵ He obviously approved the Young Turks' deportation plans; in 1915 Talaat Pasha could tell Johannes Lepsius: "We are putting your plan into practice!"¹⁰⁶ Yet the Entente, too, tried to come to terms with Turkey. As Lord of the Admiralty, Churchill proposed to leave two warships to the Turks. On August 2nd, 1914, however, the German ambassador concluded the said pact with the Turkish government that obliged Turkey to give her support should Germany be attacked by Russia. Initially the Ottoman Empire stayed neutral, but entered the war at the end of October 1914. At first the Young Turks still negotiated measures against Russia with the Dashnakian party. Johannes Lepsius pointed out that the Armenians could expect a true autonomy neither from Russia nor from Turkey. The Turkish Armenians were hardly prepared to

105 Ohandjanian (1989), 208.

106 Ibid., 213.

fight the Russians, whom they considered as their allies. The Russian Armenians feared that to massacres of the Turkish Armenians would happen should they enter the war in droves. During a visit to the front Tsar Nicholas II replied to the Armenian Catholicos George V's request to liberate and protect the Turkish Armenians that the Armenians had a great future ahead.¹⁰⁷ The Armenian patriarch of Constantinople, Sawen, called for level-headedness. The Dashnakian leader Aknuni after conferring with Ittihat leader Mehmed Talaat declared that the government acknowledged the loyalty of the Armenians.

At the start of World War One the Armenians numbered about 4.5 million worldwide, 1.5 million of them living in the Caucasian provinces of Russia. The Turkish government indicated the number of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire to be 1.3 million, 628.000 of them living in the eastern Vilayets, making up 12.53 % of the 5-million-population there. The Armenian patriarchate of Constantinople on the other hand claimed the number of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire to be 2.1 million, 1,010 000 of them living in the eastern Vilayets, where they represented 38% of the population and were – apart from 25.4% Turks and 16.3% Kurds – the strongest ethnic group. As to the true figure – 1.3 to 2.1 million – there is no consensus between the parties.¹⁰⁸

After the outbreak of the war the German cruisers Goeben and Breslau – that the Turks had "bought" and put in service - entered the Dardanelles. As a consequence, the allied forces declared war on Turkey. Enver Pasha, who had been military attaché in Berlin from 1909 until 1911, became war minister, pasha and vice-commander in chief; his campaign of conquest to Aserbeidshan -

¹⁰⁷ Nassibian (1985), 108.

¹⁰⁸ Nassibian (1985), 3.

projected for racist reasons – led to heavy losses and failed. The allied forces' attempt to enter the Dardanelles on April 25th, 1915 greatly endangered the regime; a German military mission supported the Turks. Now the Turkish government did not need to pay any heed to the western powers any more. All international treaties concerning the rights of foreigners were declared null and void. On November 11th, 1914 the supreme Muslim imam announced the Djeehad.

On July 14th, 1914 the Turkish government had 20 leaders of the Hinchakian party arrested. After a trial for high treason they were publicly hanged in Istanbul on July 15th. When the Dashnakian party was holding a congress in Erzurum in August 1914, the death squadrons of the "Teskilat-I Mahsusa" "special units" were ordered to kill all participants. By April 12th, 1915 most leading members of the Dashnakian party were in prison too, even though they had partly supported the Young Turks.¹⁰⁹ As early as in July there were Armenian upheavals in the Sivas province, and in October in Edessa, too. After the start of the war the Turkish army at the eastern front with great brutality requisitioned food supplies from Armenian farmers. The Armenians were held responsible for the failures of the Turkish army in the east. In Pera at the beginning of 1915 a dispatch from Italian and French priests to the allied fleet was discovered, mentioning possible help from the Christians of Constantinople for the fleet; this led to the systematic disarming of Christian soldiers. The central organ of the Dashnakian party was forbidden on March 31st, 1915. Three Armenian members of parliament were murdered. From Winter 1914/15 onward, Armenian soldiers in Turkey were disarmed, at first transferred to

109 Gerayer Koutcharian: *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern (1915-1917)*, in: Tessa Hoffmann: *Verfolgung, Vertreibung...* 2004, 55-75, here: 57f.

pioneer units and then shot dead company by company.¹¹⁰ The responsible generals in the east declared in March 1915 that the Armenians were to blame for the failure of the campaign. The decision to annihilate the Armenians was probably made in the CUP's central committee at the end of March, 1915. In March and April 1914 the Turks began the deportation of the Armenians of Zaytun near Marash and from the province of Adana. A German officer, who commanded the artillery fire against the Armenian quarter of Adana, wrote in a letter that now there was "a good opportunity ... to do a little clearing work in Zaytun."¹¹¹

A detailed study about the extermination of the Armenians in Erzurum describes the beginning with the disarming of the Armenian soldiers and their transfer to working battalions at the beginning of March 1915. On April 20th the Armenians in Van decided to defend themselves. The German vice consul Max Erwin von Scheubner reports this to his embassy in Constantinople. Mullahs had stirred up Muslims in the mosques. The Armenian bishop asked the vice consul for help and informed the patriarch about the situation in Van.¹¹² To the consul the governor put all blame on the army. The Armenians in some cases had but two hours' time to prepare themselves for deportation. The gendarmes treated them like enemies and beat them. On May 19th, 1915 the message came that Russian troops had

110 Tessa Hoffmann: *Deutsche Quellen und Augenzeugenberichte zum Völkermord an den Armeniern 1915/16*, in: *Das Verbrechen des Schweigens*, ed. by Tessa Hoffmann (=Progrm Paperbacks 1012), Vienna 1984, 92-119, here: 101.

111 Hovanissian (1984), 25.

112 Hilmar Kaser: "A Scene from the Inferno. The Armenians of Erzurum and the Genocide 1915-1916", in: Kieser-Schaller (2003), 129-186, here: 130-133.

taken Van and ended the siege of the Armenian quarters. Thousands of deportees camped on an open field near Erzurum. Gradually Scheubner realised that it was not a matter of retaliation toward rebels, but a systematic act of annihilation. On May 23rd, 1915 the governors of the Vilayets Erzurum, Bitlis and Van were ordered by Talaat to deport all Armenians to the deserts of Mossul and Urfa.¹¹³ Scheubner asked Mahmud Kiamil Pasha, the commander of the 3rd army, for talks. Here he was informed that the Armenians were not taken to a place some distance away, but to the concentration camps of Der-es-Sor on the lower Euphrates. He informed the ambassador, who sent the official Johann Heinrich Mordtmann to Talaat. In an audience on May 29th Talaat stated that the deportation had become necessary due to evidence of an Armenian plot. The embassy handed the reports to the consulates in Adana, Aleppo, Baghdad and Mossul. War minister Enver Pasha was said to have opted for deportation. Only conversion to Islam could save the Armenians. Catholic Armenians were deported, too. Ambassador Wangenheim forbid Scheubner any further interventions; written complaints were not passed on. Scheubner, however, understood that not the slightest evidence of a plot had been found, but that it was just a defensive lie.

On June 15th, 1915 the deportations of the Armenians from the city of Erzurum proper began. In the UN archive in Geneva there are still protocols the League of Nations had taken down on the basis of information given by survivors of the deportation in Aleppo between 1922 and 1930.¹¹⁴ Scheubner informed himself about conditions

113 *Ibd.*, 136 (with Indication of the Letter from the Ottoman State Archive).

114 *Ibd.*, 177f, note 55. a. *The Armenian genocide*, vol. 2, ed. by Artem Ohandjanian, München 1988, 190.

along the deportation routes, where Armenians were assaulted by Kurdish gangs again and again. On June 23rd, 1915 a 55-year-old Armenian Garabed, who had formerly supplied the consulate with foodstuffs, came to Scheubner. With the deportees he had come as far as the Euphrates, where Kurds had assaulted the deportation train. When the consul pointed out to general Mahmud Kiamil that there was absolutely no necessity for the deportation, the latter explained to him that after the war the "Armenian issue" would not exist any more.¹¹⁵ When on June 30th official institutions reported that 3,000 of the deportees of Erzurum had been murdered, Scheubner found the number too small; according to his investigations, 10-20,000 Armenians had been slaughtered by Kurds and irregular Turkish gangs. On July 15th, 1915 there were no Armenians left in Erzurum. Together with the governor Tahsin Scheubner visited deportees from Erzurum near Erzindjan, where he came to know what the survivors had been through. A German had seen the survivors of the deportation from Trabzon and Erzindjan. The surviving women, partly half-naked and half-starved, were eating grass as their only nourishment; they asked the German for money and were beaten by gendarmes. The eye-witness described how women and children had been treated "like animals" by gendarmes along the street. Scheubner realised that "irregular" gangs acted with the knowledge of the CUP and the Ottoman government and that the connection between deportation to the desert, robbery and massacres was in line with a detailed plan of the government. On August 5th, 1915 he reported to the ambassador that there were no more Armenians left in his consular district.¹¹⁶

115 Nassibian (1925), 141.

116 *Ibid.*, 143.

He also reports to repeatedly have heard the rumour that the Germans had spurred on the Turks. Turkish notables told Scheubner the massacres under Abdul Hamid had been a fight among men; now "irregulars" and Kurds had massacred innocent women and children. Scheubner left Erzurum at the end of September 1915; his successor Fritz Werner von Schulenburg immediately fell in line with the ambassador Wangenheim. The Austrian consul of Trabzon, Ernst Kwiatkowski, reported that Schulenburg was playing down the massacres. The example of Erwin Scheubner shows what eye-witnesses that did not willingly submit to the policy prescribed were able to find out. Armenian belongings were confiscated by the Turks, movables like leather and wool taken to an Armenian church. When the Russians took Erzurum on February 26th, 1916, they confiscated the rest of the former Armenian possessions. The near-bankrupt Turkish state was financing its racial policy from the loot taken from Christian victims! When those Armenians that had survived the death march arrived in Syria, Consul Rössler of Aleppo looked after them. From the village of Murduga near Erzurum out of 2,300 people only four women, four girls and three boys had survived. A teacher named Sarkis Manukian, who had studied philosophy in Germany, said that out of 2,000 men only 115 had survived. When Rössler spoke up for him to the ambassador, the latter proposed the teacher should turn to the interior ministry himself. Rössler replied that no Turkish post office clerk would accept an Armenian's telegram. Manukian's family too disappeared in the "killing fields" of Mesopotamia.¹¹⁷ On the death march in December 1915 Kaiané, a girl from a wealthy family in Erzurum, came as far as Mossul on, where she was hidden by Christians. From the 8,000 that

117 *Ibid.*, 156f.

had come from Erzurum with her, only 300 arrived in the desert near Djazireh. In view of the usual sexual abuse of Armenians by Turkish gendarmes and Kurdish gangs it sometimes happened that young people sought contact with paedophile Muslims, whereas girls often jumped down from rocks or took poison to escape violation. Often mothers threw their babies into the Euphrates, believing they would no longer be able to feed them. The route over rough mountain ranges had been chosen carefully, so as to be able to carry out the massacres with as few witnesses as possible. The American consul Leslie Davison visited the Armenians who had arrived in the desert; Tracy Atkinson, the consul's wife, described her experiences in her memoirs. Davison wrote to the American ambassador Morgenthau that he had seen starving women offering their children for sale and selling girls as slaves. Due to rape, many girls were infected with venereal diseases, women that had been bought by Muslims fled and left children conceived through rape. "This camp was a scene from inferno. Greater misery can't be imagined", wrote Davison.¹¹⁸ From the Armenians of Erzurum just 5,100 survived, with merely 120 men among them.¹¹⁹ The fate of the Armenians of Erzurum makes it clear that the genocide was carried out systematically by the government with the help of the army and the gendarmes. The Kurds, plagued by epidemics and economic plight, took the opportunity to rob Armenian women and children and to appropriate their belongings. The genocide was intended, planned and ruthlessly executed in a "favourable situation". The Kurds, who often want to be seen as victims of the Turks nowadays, readily played their part in the machinery of killing.

118 *Ibd.*, 166.

119 *Ibd.*, 167.

So much for the detailed study about Erzurum. In the night from April 23rd to 24th actions against the Armenians began with the arrest of Armenian elites throughout Asia Minor, friends and acquaintances of the Young Turks included. In Istanbul alone, 2,345 persons were arrested, deported to the province of Ankara, tortured and mostly killed there. In May Interior Minister Talaat Pasha ordered the systematic deportation of Armenians from the war zones to "new settlement areas" in the Mesopotamian deserts; this was justified with the allegation that Armenians were politically unreliable and suspected of supporting the enemy. From the beginning England was informed about the whole matter. As early as on May 4th, 1915 Catholicos George V of Edschmiadzin implored king George V to help his countrymen.¹²⁰ The patriarch of Constantinople tried in vain to see Talaat. Morgenthau repeatedly spoke with the Austrian ambassador Pallavicini about the massacres; on May 2nd, 1915 the Austrian ambassador reported about a conversation with Talaat, who admitted that "some thousands" of Armenians had been killed.¹²¹ Only afterwards the "dispatching" ("sevkiyat") was agreed by the council of ministers on May 27th, 1915. Merely the inhabitants of Istanbul and Smyrna – where many foreigners were staying – were excepted from the deportations. Churches and monuments were destroyed, children taken away from their parents, handed over to Turkish families and forced to convert to Islam.

After the first reports about the deportations, during which women and children – partly stark naked – were driven in zigzag toward Mesopotamia and raped and abused again and again, the Entente states declared on

120 Nassibian (1985), 71.

121 Ohandjanian (1989), 94.

May 24th, 1915: "In view of this new crime of Turkey against humanity and civilisation the allied governments publicly inform the High Gate that they will personally call to account all members of the Turkish government as well as officials that took part in these massacres."¹²² The declaration had been written by Russian foreign minister sasonow and signed by British foreign minister Edward Grey and French foreign minister Delcassé. The British deputy state secretary Robert Cecil passed on a letter of the Armenian archbishop Tourian to the American press on September 9th, 1915. It can be clearly concluded from the files that the British government made use of the massacres of the Armenians to make the neutral USA enter the war on England's side.¹²³

In the USA the press and a critical public played a much greater part than in Germany, where strict censorship was practiced; journals like the "Christian Science Monitor" as early as on September 15th, 1915 declared that the purpose of Turkish policy was to completely wipe out the Armenian and Greek races. The British consul Patrick Stevens at the same time mentioned the shocking situation of Armenian and Chaldean Christians that had fled to the Caucasus.¹²⁴ In the "New York Times" of December 1st, 1915 former American president Theodore Roosevelt severely condemned "neutrality at any cost" and the "criminal responsibility of Germany;... we refuse doing our duty in Armenia, because we have decided to keep peace at any cost."¹²⁵ Like Lepsius in Germany, in the USA, too, there were

122 Nassibian (1985), 25. Cf.: Yves Ternon: *Tabu Armenien. Geschichte eines Völkermordes*, Berlin-Frankfurt-Vienna 1981, 216 and Nassibian (1984), 72.

123 Nassibian (1985), 73f.

124 *Ibd.*, 74f.

125 *Ibd.*, 75f.

intellectuals like the historian Arnold Toynbee, who did not let themselves be dissuaded from criticism of their own government's policy.

The Turks did not let anyone stop them from taking action against the Armenians. At first they were disarmed and expelled from the army. 600 leading intellectuals from Constantinople were deported; according to Lepsius only eight of them survived the massacres. On May 15th the deportations in Kilikia, on June 16th those from the city itself began. The pattern was always the same: Men were isolated and shot dead on the spot, women and children driven into the desert, raped and in strenuous marches weakened to such a degree that many died of exhaustion. Those that survived were taken to a concentration camp in the Syrian desert, where they were killed if they didn't die of hunger and debilitation. At the end of April 1915 the highest Armenian cleric in Edessa (Urfa) had asked the Swiss Jakob Künzler to inform the European consuls in Aleppo about the situation of the Armenians. When he returned to Edessa at the beginning of July, he found already decaying Armenian corpses along the wayside.¹²⁶ For some Armenians conversion to Islam was the only rescue from sure death – although the Turkish government had in the 1915 massacres forbidden sparing victims because of conversion to Islam. On May 31st Enver informed the German embassy that Armenian schools had been closed and that press and mail services were going to be forbidden for Armenians.¹²⁷ On May 31st 1915 the German ambassador reported that minister Talaat had told a German diplomat "that the Gate wanted to use the World War for thoroughly doing away with its interior

126 Künzler (2004), 39f.

127 Ternon (1981), 217.

enemies (indigenous Christians) without being disturbed by diplomatic interventions from abroad."¹²⁸ Similarly, Austrian ambassador Pallavicini reported to Vienna on July 8th, 1915: "Here one evidently intends – since it has become suspicious - to put the Armenian element out of action once and for all."¹²⁹

From May until the end of June 1915 the Armenians were also deported from the districts of Trabzon, Sivas, Harput, Diyarbakir and Bitlis. In Van the Armenians defended themselves until their liberation by the Russian army; after the withdrawal of the Russians on August 11th, 1915 a massacre happened there too. The supposed "revolution" of the Armenians in Van later served the Turks as a pretext for the justification of the genocide.¹³⁰ After the occupation of the city the Russians burned the corpses of 55,000 Armenians. As early as at the beginning of August 1915 the German consulate in Erzurum reported that there were no Armenians left there. The belongings of the deportees were taken by Turks and Kurds; in this manner, a new class of wealthy people came into being, which was to play an important part in Turkey later on.

In August and September 1915 the Armenians of West Anatolia were deported from the districts of Izmit (Nicomedia), Bursa, Kastamuni, Ankara and Konya. The deportees were not told the route. With temperatures of minus 40 degree they often were led over the mountains naked, until they collapsed from exhaustion. On September 9th, 1915 the vice consul of Samsun reported to the embassy: "The Greek Christians are shivering with fright – with good reason – because at the first opportunity they are going to suffer the same fate as the Armenians: If

128 Ohandjanian (1989), 95f.

129 *Ibid.*, 98.

130 Morgenthau (2003), chapter 23.

Greece joins the enemy camp, her fellow believers in Turkey are doomed! Nebuchadnezzar and Abdul Hamid were pleasant people and pure bunglers in the art of extermination; for – as we presently see it with a shudder – entirely extirpating a people spread all over a large country within some weeks is something neither they nor Dschingis-Khan, Tamburlaine or the old Turkish sultans succeeded in doing."¹³¹ On September 18th, 1915 the centrist deputy Mathias Erzberger informed the foreign office about a telegram of the Dashnakians in which – among other things – possible international involvements – especially with respect to the neutral USA – were pointed out.¹³² The German government was informed about everything! Philip P. Graves, the former "Times" correspondent in Constantinople, on September 15th informed minister Lloyd George about the evacuation of the refugees on the Musa Dagh. Talaat remarked he would see to it that the idea of Armenian autonomy would be finished for the next fifty years. In September 1915 the British government knew everything about the atrocities committed against Christians in Turkey.¹³³

To save a part of the Armenians, the American ambassador Morgenthau proposed to Talaat to let them emigrate to the USA. The minister agreed at first; on October 13th, 1915, however, the Austrian ambassador reported to Vienna that the Turks feared "through mass emigration unpleasant details about the measures taken against the Armenians might get known to the public, and that the world would even more than hitherto occupy itself with occurrences in Asia Minor."¹³⁴

131 www.armenocide.de (09-09-1915).

132 www.armenocide.de (18-09-1915).

133 Nassibian (1989), 72f.

134 Ohandjanian (1989), 107.

Morgenthau reports on a conversation with Talaat, in which the latter declared Armenians should be inactivated before the war ended. According to him, hatred between Turks and Armenians is so great "that we have got to finish with them. If we don't, they will plan their revenge... We will not have the Armenians anywhere in Anatolia. They can live in the desert but nowhere else... No Armenian can be our friend after what we have done them."¹³⁵

Until October 1915 some 300,000 deportees were driven to the desert at the Euphrates north of Mossul, where they were put into concentration camps to die within a few months:

Camp Islahiye: Autumn 1915 until the beginning of 1916: 60,000

Camp Mamura: Summer to autumn 1915: approximately 40,000

Camps Radscho, Katma and Asas: Autumn 1915 until spring 1916: 60,000

Camps Bab and Achtermin: October 1915 until spring 1916: 60,000

Camp Meskene near Aleppo: November 1915 until spring 1916: 60,000

Camp Dipsi: November 1915 until April 1916: 30,000

Camp Sebka: November 1915 until June 1916: 5,000

Camp Der-es-Sor: March 17th until June 1916: 200,000

In the Ras-ul-Ajn camp at the terminus of the Baghdad railway 300-500 camp inmates per day were massacred during one month, a total of at least 70,000; in the

¹³⁵ 2003, 232f.

concentration camp of Intili 50,000 Armenian forced labourers at the Baghdad railway were killed.¹³⁶ On Lake Gölcük near Harput about 10,000 Armenian children and women were slaughtered by Kurds in summer 1915. All Armenians not born there were deported from Constantinople – between 10,000 and 30,000 people. In the largest CC Der-es-Sor in Mesopotamia, where crude oil surfaces, 80,000 deportees were smothered in the labyrinthine caves near the River Chabur, which have been called "Chabs el-Ermen" ("Ditch of the Armenians") to the present day. In a secret letter to the German ambassador on November 10th, 1915 the Armenian patriarch numbered the amount of people killed between 800,000 and a million.¹³⁷ On December 14th, 1915 the famous theologian Adolf von Harnack wrote to the deputy state secretary at the foreign office: "Reliable German authorities had in advance confirmed the partly completed extermination of Christianity in Armenia." He therefore desired notice whether the last 10,000 Armenians would be deported from Constantinople as well.¹³⁸ Intellectuals were informed, too! The German consul in Aleppo – whom Entente newspapers had accused of having participated in the massacres – on December 20th, 1914 remarks to Imperial Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg that unfortunately the "Frankfurter Zeitung" (Frankfurt Newspaper) is wrong in questioning western newspapers' claim that 800,000 Armenians have been killed already: "It's a pity one can't rule it out. In recent months I have repeatedly reported on occurrences and conditions of the most awful kind, which have caused or accompanied the extermination. It is legitimate to

136 Koutcharian (2004), 61

137 www.armenocide.de (27-11-1915).

138 www.armenocide.de (14-12-1915)

conclude that after such occurrences the number of casualties must be extraordinarily high. The best informed local Armenians, who are in permanent contact with deportees persons from all parts of the country, estimate the following round sums: total amount of Armenians in Turkey: 2.5 million, 1.2 of them in the eastern Vilayets Erzurum, Van, Bitlis, Diarbekr, Kharput, Sivas. In entire Asia Minor an approximate half million has been spared from deportation (thus e.g. in the district of Marash, less than 9,000 out of 50,000 have remained), an estimated half million has arrived in Syria and Mesopotamia. The province of Van with about 150,000 to 200,000 Armenians, where – due to its having been a war area – there are special circumstances, is not taken into account. Mortality among those having arrived in Syria and Mesopotamia is extremely high and will remain high as a consequence of the deportation, which is far from being completed. In view of these circumstances, serious sources that are better informed than others think it probable that the number is even higher. There is a difference in that men – at least from eastern provinces – have for the largest part been violently killed, while the death of women and children has been due to slower methods, so that the Turks could say: "They die by themselves." If – using other sources – one estimates the number of Armenians in Turkey to be only 1.5 million, then all figures would have to be lower. The percentage of people killed, however, would remain the same."¹³⁹ On December 20th, 1915 the Socialist deputy Karl Liebknecht communicated an inquiry to the president of the Reichstag, asking what the imperial chancellor was doing about the fact that "hundreds of thousands" of Armenians had been slaughtered by the Turks.¹⁴⁰ The

139 www.armenocide.de (20-12-1915).

140 www.armenocide.de (20-12-1915).

question whether he knew "that during the current war in the allied Turkish empire the Armenian population has been deported from their residences and massacred by hundreds of thousands?" In a further inquiry on January 11th, 1916 Liebknecht wanted to know if the chancellor was informed that Dr. Lepsius had spoken "of a virtual extermination of the Turkish Armenians".¹⁴¹ On December 31st, 1915 the German consul Holstein reported of those Armenians that had been "dispatched" from Diyarbakir to Mossul: "From the Armenians deported there from Diyarbakir not a single person has reached Mossul up to now. As the local Wali explained to me at that time, no Armenian from Diyarbakir has stayed alive."¹⁴²

The German ambassador Hans von Wangenheim quite openly supported Turkish policy; to the American ambassador Morgenthau he freely confessed that he was not prepared to do anything for the Armenians.¹⁴³ There were, however, other Germans, who did not back the cover-up policy of the imperial government. Among others there is the writer Armin T. Wegner (1886-1978), who from spring 1915 worked at the "German-Ottoman Medical Care Mission" and – despite Cemal Pasha's ban on photographing - took a lot of photographs in the camps of Miskene and Aleppo and smuggled letters to the American embassy in Constantinople. Two letters published in 1916 led to his dismissal in the same year. In his 1919 "open letter" to the American president Wilson he wrote about his experiences: "Children cried themselves to death, men smashed themselves on rocks,

141 www.armenocide.de (11.1.1915).

142 www.armenocide.de (31-12-1915)

143 Morgenthau (2003), 250-263, chapter 27: "I shall do nothing for the Armenians", says the German Ambassador.

mothers threw their little ones into wells, pregnant women, with threw themselves into the Euphrates with a song... I have seen madmen eating their excreta, women cooking the bodies of their new-born children, girls cutting up their mothers' still warm corpses, searching the bowels for the gold swallowed for fear of thieving gendarmes. In crumbled caravanserais they were lying among heaps of corpses and half decayed bodies apathetically, waiting for death to come; for how long can they eke out their miserable existences by searching horse dung for grain or eating grass.¹⁴⁴ In 1919 he published the book "Weg ohne Heimkehr. Ein Martyrium in Briefen" ("Way Without Return. A Martyrdom in Letters") and in the following year "Im Hause der Glückseligkeit. Aufzeichnungen aus der Türkei" ("In the House of Bliss. Notes from Turkey.") In 1921 he wrote a preface to the trial of the Armenian murderer of the Young Turk Talaat Pasha in Berlin.

Among the rest of the Germans who eye-witnessed the 1915 massacres there is Dr. Martin Niepage, a teacher at the German Secondary High School in Aleppo. On September 10th, 1916 he sent a report with photos, also signed by his Swiss colleague Dr. Eduard Graeber, to the German Reichstag. In it he described the condition of the deportees, who lived under the most primitive circumstances. Lepsius included this report in his book "Deutschland und Armenien" ("Germany and Armenia"), which was published in an English translation in London in 1917 ("The Horrors of Aleppo, seen by a German eye-witness"). It contains shocking examples of Turkish atrocities against Armenians.

144 Tessa Hofmann: *Deutsche Quellen* (1984), 97.

"What we saw with our own eyes here in Aleppo was only the last scene of the great tragedy of Armenian extermination, merely a diminutive fraction of the horror that was going on simultaneously in the other Turkish provinces. Much more appalling things were reported by engineers of the Baghdad railway when they returned from the track or by travellers who had encountered the caravans of the deportees on their way. Some of these gentlemen didn't want any food for several days, as they had seen such horrors. One of them reported ...of naked corpses of raped females lying around in masses on the railway embankments near Tell Abiad and Raz ul Ain. Many of them had had clubs forced into their recta. Another ... had seen Turks tying Armenian men to one another, fire a series of shots at the human bundle and leave laughing, while the victims were slowly dying with terrible twitches. Other men had had their hands tied to their backs and were left rolling down steep slopes. Down below stood women, who maltreated them with knives until they were dead...

In my presence at the German casino in Aleppo, the German consul of Mossul reported that in some places along the way from Mossul to Aleppo he had seen so many cut off children's hands that one could have paved the road with them. In the German hospital of Urfa there lies a little girl whose hands have been cut off, too. In an Arab village before Aleppo ... the German consul of Mossul saw flat holes with fresh Armenian corpses. The Arabs of the village said they had killed these Armenians on the order of the government. One of them proudly claimed that he alone had slaughtered eight. In many Christian houses in Aleppo I found hidden girls, who escaped death by some chance, be it that Europeans had had the opportunity to buy these unfortunate people for a

few marks from the Turkish soldier that had raped them last. All these girls are as if mentally disturbed. Many have had to watch the Turks cut their parents' throats. I know such poor creatures, who can't be brought to utter a single word for months, who can't manage a smile even now. A girl of about 14 years was accommodated by the manager of the warehouse of the Baghdad railway in Aleppo... in the course of one night the child had been raped by Turkish soldiers so often that it had gone mad completely. I saw it wallow on its pillow with hot lips in its madness, and only with great effort I could give it water to drink."¹⁴⁵

Cemal Pasha wanted to court-martial the two teachers in 1916; both, however, had fled already. As a rule, German officers were completely blind to Turkish atrocities; they even assisted them in shelling Armenian quarters, etc. Occasionally, however, critical voices could be heard here too, like the one of General Otto Liman von Sanders, who in 1920 published the book "Fünf Jahre in der Türkei" ("Five Years in Turkey"). He personally knew the Young Turkish dictators and, in addition to Lepsius, acted as an expert witness in the Talaat trial in Berlin. Austrian diplomats often reported of the massacres in a much more differentiated way than the German ones, although here, too, the official course defended the alliance and the emperor Charles – meanwhile beatified – visited the Young Turkish dictators in Constantinople in 1916.

The Swiss auxiliary Jakob Künzler, who worked in Urfa (Edessa), recorded the destiny of some survivors. The Armenian Vechsa Bedrossian, who – together with 2,000 men, women and children – had to leave Charput on July 10th, 1915, reported in Urfa (Edessa): "When some

145 www.armenocide.de (10-9-1916).

trains of deportees from Erzurum and Sivas had joined us, we went on... not yet... to Malatia, but southward over the steep Taurus mountains... there, many children fell victim to the extraordinary strain... They just lay where they had fallen, a welcome prey to wild animals... in the high-lying valley ... between Malatia and Adiaman... we were ransacked by the Kurds of the neighbourhood. They took our men from us. They were led aside a bit and killed... On the further way as far as Samsat most of our young women and girls got lost. Each of the Kurds of the neighbourhood took the women and girls he chose... we never got water without paying gold for it... When nothing could be got out of us, we were driven into a stony desert. They undressed us and took all the used garments that had still a certain value. In the course of this undressing it was revealed that some of the little boys among us had been dressed up as girls. They were immediately smashed to bits. Now the Kurds drove us – a large naked crowd of about 2,000 girls and women – to a narrow square, and now the horrors began. We were shot at from all sides. A terrible pushing and shoving ensued. Those who were on the edge were shot down, those amidst the crowd were smothered. I myself only escaped death because I came to stand upon some corpses... Only some hundreds of us were still alive. ...Eventually we went to a Kurdish village to ask for water. Although we were completely naked, the Kurds of the village demanded money from us at first. After they had seen that there was nothing to be got from us, they chased us away from the water. I wanted to drink from a dirty puddle, but, before I could do it, I had received a sword-stroke on my arm. Without having drunk, we had to go on. The August sun of Mesopotamia was singeing our naked bodies... With big burns on our bodies we finally reached a Christian village near Urfa...

I got a short child's shirt that I could use for covering my nakedness after 16 days, albeit in a makeshift way. In the course of time some 200 women gathered in that village, the remnants of 6,000 people with whom we had started our journey in Malatia... On the same day we got to a deportee camp in Urfa... I only escaped the deportation of Urfa's population thanks to the fact that I was lying with a high fever the day the police fetched all Armenians from the hospital."¹⁴⁶ As a reaction to protests in the German public the embassy had repeatedly passed on Germany's objections to the massacres to the Turkish government; they did not, however, wish to put the alliance at risk. On December 17th, 1915 the German ambassador received an official note from the Turkish government saying it was a purely internal affair and the German reproaches were "unacceptable".¹⁴⁷ Since then there had not been any more direct protests by the German government; they had resigned themselves to the matter, which Germany had not explicitly supported, but not officially condemned either.

The Greek consulates, too, supplied the public with shocking reports of the massacres. On August 6th, 1915 the Greek ambassador reported that the vice consul of Konya had informed him that Turkish cycles openly declared that after the Armenians it would be the Greeks' turn.¹⁴⁸ The vice consul of Samsun reported on June 14th, 1915 that Armenians were only able to save their lives through forced conversion and circumcision. In Kerason Christians were dumped from boats into the sea by the Turks. Their houses were given to Muslim refugees from the Caucasus. On August 6th, 1915 the Greek vice consul

146 Künzler (2004), 58-61.

147 Ternon (1981), 221.

148 Hassiotis (1992), 138.

of Konya wrote that on the death route to Baghdad starving Armenians had sold their own children. Deported women from the higher middle classes had married simple Turkish street workers to save themselves. It was a fiendish plan of extermination and there was no doubt that all Armenians living in Turkey had to expect the same fate.¹⁴⁹

As in the Nazi holocaust here, too, there is the question why the Armenians, who had partly collected weapons before - even though carrying weapons had been forbidden to Christians - put up so little resistance. The auxiliary Künzler reports from Edessa (Urfa) that there was some resistance in fact. Here the police carried out house searches on August 19th, 1915. The CUP representatives urged the mob to slaughter Christians. Armenians dressed up as soldiers provided weapons from Aleppo. Barricades were erected around the Armenian quarter. The gendarmes were outside ransacking the deportee trains. On the third day of the siege the Kurds were reinforced by Turkish infantry, then the army brought heavy artillery. Christian Syrians were sent ahead as working soldiers with axes. When the leader Mugerditsch was hit by a piece of shrapnel on the 15th day of the siege, the defence broke down. All men were shot dead and buried in mass graves. Women were driven on the death march with lashes of the whip. "Doubtlessly there was the plan and will that the people of Urfa should all die in the desert. Therefore they were led to and fro until eventually nobody was left to be transported further."¹⁵⁰

Armenian resistance became famous in Urfa (Edessa), Shahin Karahisaar and particularly on the Musa Dagħ near Antiochia, where 5,000 Armenians from five villages

149 *Ibd.*, 144-146.

150 Künzler (2004), 84.

were besieged by the Turks from July 21st to September 12th, 1915, until four French warships and one English ship took 4,058 survivors on board and got them to Port Said. Before the Syrian coast on September 7th, 1915 the French admiral informed the high commissioner of Cyprus that 6,000 Armenians were defending themselves against the Turks on the Musa Dagh near the bay of Antiochia. He gave ammunition and provisions to the Armenians and wanted to know what was to be done. The commissioner thought support impossible. Foreign minister Grey did on no account want to take the refugees to Egypt and told this to the British ambassador Bertie in Paris. Grey's reply arrived too late; the French admiral got the Musa Dagh fighters into safety in Egypt.¹⁵¹

The Protestant parson Digran Andreassian, who had been present at the conquest of Zaytun, wrote a record of the events around the rescued Armenians from the Musa Dagh. When the Austrian writer Franz Werfel met Armenian children in a carpet factory in Aleppo in 1930, he came to know about the affair and wrote the novel "The forty Days of the Musa Dagh", which appeared in 1933 and became famous all over the world. With respect to this, Theodor W. Adorno writes that Germans are hardly aware of the killing of millions of innocent people, "even though a bestseller like "The Forty Days of the Musa Dagh" by Werfel drew its subject matter from it. As early as in World War One the Turks have had ...more than a million Armenians murdered. Highest-ranking German military and government executives evidently knew about it, but kept it strictly secret."¹⁵² The defenders of Edessa and Shahin Karahissar

151 Nassibian (1985), 92f.

152 Theodor sW. Adorno: *Erziehung nach Auschwitz*, in: *Erziehung zur Mündigkeit*, Frankfurt 1970, 88-104 here: 89.

were massacred; in Van 3,000 to 4,000 Armenians were besieged by the Turks and finally liberated by the Russians. On November 7th, 1915 after a conversation with the great vizier Halil Bey the Austrian ambassador wrote "that only the most cruel and cynical imagination is capable of envisaging the horrors of these events."¹⁵³ After the pogroms in Adrianople the local consul Nadamlenzki together with his Bulgarian colleague wrote to the government: "All principles of civilisation and human feelings... have been trampled on. The fact that what is going on here is of course merely the execution of a carefully thought out programme which pursues the aim of exterminating the Christian element in Turkey is so grave that the undersigned feel obliged to report it to the powers concerned in order to eventually counteract future unpleasant surprises. ...The procedure ... does not only suggest the destruction, but rather the extirpation of a complete race."¹⁵⁴

Among the most important rescue operations that the Armenians succeeded in carrying out is the transport of the treasure of the Catholicosate of Kilikia to Syria. Catholicos Sahak II had at the beginning of the war moved to the provincial capital Adana and then to Aleppo, where numerous groups of deportees were collected. On September 3rd, 1915 the order of deportation also came to the Kilikian monastery of Sis, the seat of the Catholicos. Bishop Chad Adschahpajan assumed the leadership of the monastic caravan that left Sis on September 13th. On the river Dschihan a mule carriage containing the most sacred relics of the Armenians fell into the water. Young men jumped into the river and rescued the relics like the right hand of Gregory the Enlightened. After 23 days the

153 Ohandjanian (1989), 111.

154 *ibid.*, 112.

caravan reached Aleppo, where Sahak II stayed until 1930. He then moved to Antelias in present-day Lebanon, where the treasure of the Catholicosate – which was shown in an exhibition in Halle on the Saale in 2000 – is kept today. In addition to liturgical garments, mitres, crowns, staffs and old manuscripts, above all valuable relics were rescued. With this Antelias became a centre of the Armenian communities in exile.

Actions of extermination were not, however, restricted to Armenians; Greek and Syrian Christians, too, were persecuted in a cruel way. Even before the beginning of the war the Turks had started deporting Greeks from Thracia and Ionia to the interior of the country. But as Greece was a sovereign state and in the wake of the persecution of the Greeks difficulties were to be expected, the Turks proceeded more carefully. Nevertheless "hundreds of thousands of Greeks were deported from the coastal regions to the interior country for strategic and social-technological reasons."¹⁵⁵ On June 14th, 1914 the Austrian ambassador Pallavicini reported to the foreign ministry that the Greek ambassador Panas had presented reports of Greek deportations from the Greek consulates in Gallipolis, Rostodo (Tekirdag), Kydionia (Aivali) and Vourla (Urla) near Smyrna.¹⁵⁶ The German admiral Usedom told ambassador Morgenthau that he had given the Turks the advice to carry out deportations.¹⁵⁷ The Austrian ambassador in Greece also informed the government about the things he was told about the matter by the Greek foreign minister. As early as on January 14th,

¹⁵⁵ Kieser-Schaller (2003), 28.

¹⁵⁶ Harry Tsirkinidis: *Der Völkermord an den Griechen Kleinasien (1914-1923)*, in: Tessa Hoffmann, ed.: *Verfolgung, Vertreibung...* (2004), 135-176, here: 141.

¹⁵⁷ Morgenthau (2003), 251.

1914 the foreign ministry in Athens had been informed about the respective plans of the Young Turks. On May 14th, 1914 Talaat Pasha ordered to evacuate all Greek settlements on the Dardanelles as far as Kyssos (Cesme) by force and to settle the region with Muslim refugees from the Balkan and Turks from Anatolia: "For political reasons it is urgently necessary that the Greek inhabitants of the coast of Asia Minor are forced to abandon their villages and settle in the provinces of Erzurum and Chaldea. If they refuse to move to the places mentioned please give oral instructions to Muslim brothers how to force the Greeks to remove voluntarily by any means possible. In this case don't forget to obtain confirmations from the migrants that they are abandoning their homes of their own free will."¹⁵⁸ In May and June 1914 there were massacres of Greeks in Erythrai and Fokea in Ionia; in Pergamon (Bergama) the Turks on May 27th, 1914 gave the Greek population just two hours time to leave the city. Thousands fled to the islands of Chios and Lesbos, 40,000 to Smyrna and 80,000 to the neighbourhood. The expatriates had to sign declarations that they had left their land voluntarily and pledged themselves to never return again. The systematic annihilation of the Greek communities of Asia Minor, however, came toward the end of and after the First World War. Since 1914 500,000 to 773,859 Greeks had fled from Ionia to Greece via East Thracia and Pontus.¹⁵⁹

The inner Christian rivalries between Greeks and Armenians at times came up with strange effects. Ioannis K. Hassiotis shows the rivalries on the basis of Greek ambassadorial reports. Thus the Greek consul P. Adamidis of Mersin on May 7th, 1915 reported of the deportation of the Armenians from Adana to Kappadocia,

158 Tsirkin dis (2004), 139.

159 Hofmann : Mit einer Stimme (2004), 16.

saying it was now to be expected that the Greeks could take the places of the Armenians. During the persecution of the Greeks in Adana Armenians had shown nothing but hatred toward them.¹⁶⁰

The "Nestorians" of East Syria lived primarily in the Hakkari area around Seert, in the neighbourhood of Mossul and in Iran. After the first massacres in October and November 1914 Shimun XIX Benjamin, the patriarch of the "Nestorians", after a large tribal gathering declared war to Turkey. In the present-day Turkish Hakkari area in 1915/16 about 20,000 to 30,000 "Mountain Assyrians" were killed by Turks and Kurds.¹⁶¹ The "Jacobite" Christians in East Turkey, who had no protectors in Europe whatsoever, weren't spared the massacres either. The Syrian Christians in the provinces of Van and Diyarbakir – where in 1913 also 4,000 Armenians were living – as well as in Mardin and in the Turabdin were partly exterminated by Turks and Kurds in 1915. The Christian community in the city of Seert, where the famous "Chronicle of Seert" had been written in Arab in the 11th century, was completely annihilated. The edition of the chronicle was being prepared for printing in the "Patrologia Orientalis" by its discoverer Archbishop Addai Scher, when the Muslims destroyed the bishop's see and the library with the manuscript; today nothing in Seert reminds of the former Christian community. As a rule the Turks also blew up churches and monasteries, or turned them into mosques. The "Nestorian" Christian community in the Hakkari area did not survive the First World War either.

160 Ioannis K. Hassiotis: *The Armenian Genocide and the Greeks: Response and Records (1915-1923)*, in: *The Armenian Genocide*, ed. by Richard G. Hovanissian, New York 1992, 129-151, here: 134.

161 Gabriele Yonan: *A Forgotten Holocaust: Die Vernichtung der christlichen Assyrer in der Türkei (=Pogrom 148/149)*, Göttingen 1989, 213.a. *The Armenian genocide 2* (1988), 312.

On July 28th, 1915 Walter Holstein, the German consul in Mossul, reported to the ambassador in Istanbul that the Syrians and Chaldeans between Midyat and Mardin had started an insurgence against Dr. Mehmed Reschid, the infamous governor of Diyarbakir: "This insurgence is directly due to the Wali's extreme actions against Christians in general. They are just defending themselves as well as they can." After he had demanded the ambassador to speak up for Reschid's dismissal, he turned to interior minister Talaat, but the governor remained in office. Ambassador Hohenlohe-Langenburg reported to Berlin on July 31st, 1915: "Since the beginning of this month the Wali of Diyabakir, Reschid Bey, has started the systematic extermination of the Christian population of his administrative district, indiscriminate of race or denomination. Among others the Catholic Armenians of Mardin and Tellermen and the Chaldean Christians and the non-unified Syrians of the districts of Midiyat, Djeziret ibn Omar and Nisibis have been especially affected by this."¹⁶² On September 26th, 1915 Consul Rössler reported from Aleppo: "Apart from the Armenians not only Nestorians, but also Old Syrians (Jacobites), Catholic Syrians (Syrianians) and other Christians have been exiled in the eastern provinces. For some time it has been said here that such Christians have been killed, too."¹⁶³ In Hazik between Mardin and Midiat Syrian Christians entrenched themselves, too; here, like in Turabdin, the matter was settled peacefully. On January 28th, 1916 the envoy Wolff-Metternich reported to Berlin that in Seert the entire Christian population had been slaughtered.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁶³ www.armenocide.de (26-09-1915).

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* (28-01-1916).

Nevertheless the persecutions continued until September 1915. In view of the massacres of Christians in Turkey there were sieges and the defence battle of Christians in the besieged localities of Inwardo and Hah in the Turabdin, and in the Mor Malke monastery. In 1915 Christians entrenched themselves in the fortified churches of Inwardo and Hah, resisting the siege of the Turkish army for months; of course the Kurds, too, who here in the Christian Turabdin were by no means in the position of victims, took part in the systematic massacres of 1895 and 1915. The monastery of Quartamin (Mor Gabriel), where six monks lived, became the refuge for the population of Kfarbe. The Kurds bribed the Turkish officers to be able to kill the inmates. The Kurdish clan of Ahzm expropriated the monastery and lived there for four years. Only after the armistice the Christians were able to take possession of the destroyed monastery in 1919. In 1919 the archpriest Isaak Armale of Mardin published information on the 1915 massacres. The archpriest Suleyman Henno of Arkah later in the Syrian exile collected news about the survivors.¹⁶⁵

The leader of the Christian defence in the castle of Inwerdo was Masud of the Mirsa family. In a report of the apostolic legate Hofer of October 26th, 1915 there is mention of a massacre in which the Catholic bishop had been slaughtered together with 700 followers.¹⁶⁶ That the German government was informed about this too is shown in a report of November 4th, 1915 on the siege of

165 Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der syrischen Aramäer im Turabdin 1915, collected by the Archpriest Sleman Henno of Arkah, translated by Amill Gorgis and Georg Toro. Compare: Ray Jabre Mouawad: The Kurds and their Christians neighbours. The case of the orthodox Syriacs, in: *Parole de l' Orient* 17, 1992, 127-141

166 Ohandjanian (1989), 108; in the museum of Mardin, which is located in the former palace of the unified patriarch, there is nothing to be found about the Christians in the exhibition on the city's history!

Azakh (Beth Zabday) in the Turabdin by the German vice-consul of Mossul to the embassy in Istanbul:

"As I have heard, the Freiherr v.d. Goltz has ordered the 4th army to send troops to Midiat to suppress the insurgence. I point out that it wouldn't be true to consider and treat the Christians (Syrians and a small fraction of Armenians) entrenched between Midiat and Mardin (near Azik) – against whom the above-mentioned troops are meant to take action – as rebels. They are – on the contrary – Christians that have managed to escape from the massacres and are now defending their lives instead of letting themselves be slaughtered like lambs. It can be assumed that – as soon as Turkish troops will have stormed Azik – none of the Christians there will stay alive. On the other hand the matter could now still be settled without bloodshed if one entered into negotiations with the besieged and – in return for handing over their arms – granted them retreat and settlement in Mesopotamia. As after experiences so far the Christians can't put any trust in the words of the Turkish government, it would be necessary that a German officer or a consular official were present at the negotiations. I propose Mr Scheubner-Richter, whose troops are to be sent to Azik and who consequently can't go on before a settlement of this affair. I myself too would be prepared to go on to Azik. A local Syrian bishop should also be called in to the negotiations. The local Wali, who shares my view, would also be ready to accompany us. He has proposed no motion in this matter, as this could be interpreted as an intrigue against the Wali of Diyarbakir. Were the affair handled in the manner proposed, I think I could guarantee a quick and satisfying success. I obediently leave this up to you to submit this to general field marshal Freiherr von der Goltz.¹⁶⁷ The

167 www.armenocide.de (4-11-1915).

Prussian Freiherr Colmar von der Goltz entered Turkish services in 1883 and served as a Turkish army commander until 1916. Goltz entrusted the execution of the operation to the Turkish colonel Nadschi Bey, who had been to Germany and spoke German. On November 12th the German embassy reported to Berlin that Goltz had given notice that "some time ago an action planned by the Turkish army command against a number of Christians of Syrian denomination who together with Armenians had entrenched themselves in a hardly accessible point between Mardin and Midiat to escape the slaughters of Christians organised by the Wali of Diyarbakir. As the IVth army – that had originally been put in charge of this expedition – was too far away, the field marshal had in a detachment ordered the IIIrd army to restore order there. The consular administrator Holstein had in his turn – with regard to its not being a genuine insurgence – in accordance with the Wali in Mossul pointed out the possibility of negotiations with the besieged and declared it to be desirable that apart from other personages Herr von Scheubner-Richter, whose troops were also meant to take part in the expedition, would be present at the negotiations.¹⁶⁸ This seems to have been the reason why on the order of the Turkish army command the sieges in the Turabdin were ended without a bloodbath.

In the once famous Christian college city of Nisibis (Nusaybin) Christians were exterminated, too. The surviving archpriest Beth Hanno reported on this in his notes: "When the Turks led the Syrians out of the city, they knew they were led to their deaths... The Turks... began to slaughter one after the other beside a well like a lamb. Before putting the knife to his throat they told each

168 www.armenocide.de (12-11-1915).

of those they stabbed: Convert to Islam and we will not kill you! Not a single one complied with this wish, no one disowned his lord Jesus Christ. So they slaughtered them all and threw their corpses into the well. Thus the ancient Christian city of Nusaybin was robbed of its Christians."¹⁶⁹ In all, 90,000 "Jacobites" were murdered in the Mardin area, 5,379 of them in Diyarbakir, 5,815 in Mardin itself, 25,830 in Midyat and 6,165 in Savur. 336 villages were devastated, 162 churches destroyed and 136 priests murdered.

10. The Reactions of the Western World

The declaration of the Entente powers of May 24th, 1915 are an impressive proof of how much about the massacres was already known in the west after a month. As early as in June 1915 Jakob Künzler informed the German, the Austrian and the American consuls and the German diplomat Max von Oppenheim about the events. On May 31st, 1915 the German ambassador Wangenheim informed the Berlin government of the start of the deportations and asked it to notify Johannes Lepsius and the German Armenian committees. Although the anti-Armenian ambassador Wangenheim warned the government Turkey would be "angered" by the parson's expected initiatives, Lepsius at the end of June got the permission to travel. On July 24th, 1915 he arrived in Istanbul, but interior minister Talaat denied him the journey into the country's interior. The German marine attaché Humann negotiated a meeting with war minister Enver for him. On Lepsius' proposal to entrust him with

169 Amill Gorgis: *The Völkermord an den Syro-Armeniern*, in: Tessa Hoffmann: *Persecution, Deportation...* (2004), 111-120, here: 117. compare: M. P.V.: *Documents sur les événements de Mardine (1915-20)*, in : *Studia Orientalia Christiana Collectanea*, vol. 29/30, 1998, 5-220.

the provisioning of the deportees, Enver is said to have replied that if he allowed foreigners to bring help to the Armenians, they would not stop pinning their hopes on meddling from abroad. The Turks could handle their interior enemies, but the Germans could not.¹⁷⁰ He added that the members of the government agreed "to finish the Armenians now."¹⁷¹ Lepsius returned to Germany and tried to mobilize the public. On September 16th, 1915 he anonymously published the article "Die Ausrottung eines Volkes" ("The Annihilation of a Nation") in the 'Dasler Nachrichten'. General Consul Wunderlich on September 22nd complained to the imperial chancellor: "This gentleman is said to have been to Switzerland recently and to have reported that the foreign office in Berlin is completely informed of the course and extent of the persecution of the Armenians. According to him, the foreign office has tried to put a stop to these persecutions, but the Turks, above all Enver Pasha, are not listening to anybody as far as their interior affairs are concerned. Germany, he has said, has so much trouble with Turkey, because Turkey occasionally starts wavering due to offers made by the Entente. America has seriously pondered solving the Armenian issue by putting settlement areas in the west at this people's disposal, but Enver Pasha doesn't like this either. To Lepsius, who was in Constantinople, is said to have explained to Enver Pasha that the entire trade in Turkey is in Armenian hands. As soon as they would be exterminated, 'Turkey would have

170 Dominik J. Schaller: Die Rezeption des Völkermordes an den Armeniern in Deutschland 1915-1945, in: Kieser-Schaller (2003), 517-556, here: 525. In 1919 Lepsius published the article "Mein Besuch in Konstantinopel, Juli-August 1915, in: Christlicher Orient 1919, 21-33; this report was later used by Franz Werfel for his Musa Dagh book.

171 Ternon (1981), 219.

no stomach any more'. Enver Pasha is reported to have replied that Turkey will be able to live on with a weak stomach for some time. As so far nothing has been achieved for the Armenians in Constantinople, Lepsius thought it wise to make a lot of noise against Germany's allies in the neutral press. The Swiss articles of indignation are meant to serve as the basis of a new attempt at intervention in favour of the Armenians. Mr Lepsius' behaviour may do his Christian heart great honour; his mind should tell him that by way of the – as he knows – useless agitation in the neutral country he achieves nothing but a damage to Germany."¹⁷²

On October 5th, 1915 Lepsius gave a lecture to leading German press representatives, emphasising that Germany's reputation would be greatly damaged if the government were not going to work on the Young Turks: "As to the interior situation in Turkey. – Dr. Lepsius, who recently gave a lecture not intended to be published to the Berlin press, has – mainly in the interest of the church, as one may suppose – travelled Asia Minor for 30 years and has been there again recently, spoke of the expulsion of the Armenian people: this on the basis of reports given by German salesmen, missionaries, railway employees, further Greek, Bulgarian and American ambassadorial records, finally messages of the Armenian patriarchate from the interior country and the central committee of the constitutional Armenian party in Constantinople. In Erzurum at the beginning of the European war the Armenians were urged by members of the Young Turkish committee to revolutionize the 1.5 million Russian Armenians in the Caucasus (there are 2 million in Turkey). This has not been done, for the Caucasian Armenians have been treated so well that they are putting their backs into

172 www.armenocide.de (22-9-1915).

the Russian cause. The Turks can never gain the Caucasus any more. They have – at the beginning of the Turkish war – disarmed all Armenians in the Turkish army and hitherto merely used them as armament soldiers. Then the Armenian population was disarmed in a rather hasty way, although there the arms were part of the citizens' equipment in peace. Quite contrarily, the Turkish population was armed by the state and Kurdish home regiments and gangs formed from thousands of prison inmates. From November till April 400 to 500 Armenian villages have been looted and about 26,000 Armenians have been killed still in their residences. Armenian armament soldiers frequently desert, because their Turkish comrades often killed them at work. At the beginning of the war the Armenian leaders had got in contact with the Turkish authorities to overcome difficulties, yet in the last three months the Turks have exterminated half of their Armenians. As Enver admits, at the end of May there came the order to deport the Armenian population from all Anatolian Vilayets to the Arab desert. This has been carried out. Naturally, a part has got stuck there. 100,000 to 200,000 have been massacred on their way. 2,000 to 3,000 will have arrived there and will be killed unless help is brought to them. No one in Turkey denies these facts. As to the question of who is to blame, the lecturer thought he could fully exonerate the Armenians. In some places they managed to defend themselves, but at that time, e.g. in Van, they still knew nothing of the movements at the Russian border and were surprised when the Russians came, whom they naturally welcomed as their liberators. As for the rest, the Armenian central committee had given order to avoid everything that could cause offence, as it was feared Abdul Hamid's old programme of persecution of Christians might be resumed on this opportunity. A high-

ranking official has told the lecturer: "We would really have to be blinded if we didn't cease this opportunity to rid ourselves of the Armenians."¹⁷³

On the following day a representative of the foreign office depicted Lepsius as an "insurgent". In his *"Report on the Situation of the Armenian People in Turkey"* (1916, in French 1919) he described the goings-on in the Ottoman Empire district by district, collected money and had the text sent to the Reichstag deputies, newspapers and Protestant parsonages in a circulation of 20,000 in July 1916. The delivery of the book was, however, blocked by authorities. Lepsius went into voluntary exile in Holland, where he stayed until the end of the war. In 1919 his *"Bericht über die Lage des armenischen Volkes"* (*Report on the Situation of the Armenian People*) was published under the title *"Der Todesgang des armenischen Volkes"* (*"The Way to Death of the Armenian People"*). The foreign office in Berlin, which in view of the Versailles negotiations wanted to clear itself of the reproach of a joint responsibility for the massacres, in 1919 exhorted Lepsius to publish files with the reports of German consuls and ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire under the title *"Deutschland und Armenien. Eine Sammlung diplomatischer Aktenstücke"* (*"Germany and Armenia. A Collection of Diplomatic Files."*)¹⁷⁴ Later on critics claimed that - with the peace negotiations in process - he had wanted to exonerate the German Empire from a partial responsibility for the genocide.

¹⁷³ www.armenocide.de (12-12-1915).

¹⁷⁴ This was edited anew by Wolfgang Gust in 2003 (www.armenocide.de), because the reproach had been made that several passages proving the partial responsibility of Germany had been omitted. From 1922 onward Lepsius jointly with Albrecht Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and Friedrich Thimme published the big file edition *"Die große Politik der europäischen Kabinette 1871-1914. Sammlung der Diplomatischen Akten des Auswärtigen Amtes."*

The German government, too, knew exactly what was going on in Turkey. In summer 1915 the German consuls and the ambassador to the Ottoman Empire saw that the "resettling" of the Armenians in reality was genocide, intended and carried out by the Young Turks alone. On June 12th, 1915 Dr. Mordtmann reported of a conversation with the Armenian patriarch, who – he said – was conscious of the fact that "the patriarch considers the object of the High Gate's anti-Armenian policy not only the temporary paralysing of the Armenian population, but its deportation from Turkey and its extermination respectively, and that he, the patriarch, has no hopes of a peaceful solution any more."¹⁷⁵ On June 17th Ambassador Wangenheim wrote to the imperial chancellor: "That the banishment of the Armenians is not only motivated by military considerations is obvious. The minister of the interior, Talaat Bey, has just recently expressed his view on this unreservedly to Dr. Mordtmann, who is currently employed by the imperial embassy, to the effect that the Gate wants to use the world war to do make a clean sweep among its inner enemies – the domestic Christians; this, he said, was also in the interest of the allied Germans, as Turkey would be strengthened in this way."¹⁷⁶

On June 22nd, 1915 Johannes Lepsius wrote to the foreign office: "As far as the news goes, some 200,000 Armenians are said to have been affected by the deportation measures up to now. In particular, the regions of the upper Euphrates (Ersingjan, Kemach, Baiburt), the Taurus and Amanus areas (Zeitun, Hadjin, Aintab, Marasch) and Kilikia are mentioned. In other areas, like

¹⁷⁵ www.armenocide.de (12-6-1915).

¹⁷⁶ Koutcharian (2004), 70.

Erzurum, similar measures are being prepared. As in Thracia, between Adrianople and the Marmara Sea the Greek population of the villages has been expelled, too, this is evidently an attempt – under the veil of martial law and by way of exploiting the Muslim's emotional high, which has been awakened by the holy war – to decimate the Christian population of the empire as much as possible and to abandon it to climatically unfavourable and insecure border districts through deportation. The following example shows how this is done: From the about 27,000 inhabitants of Zeitun in the Taurus highland the male population was despatched to the hot Euphrates lowlands of Der-es-Sor to live among Arab Beduine tribes (500 kilometres south-east), girls, women and children on the other hand were transported to the Angora area (500 kilometres north-east); males, then, were separated from their families by 1,000 kilometres. During the transport the young girls were taken to Turkish harems, in the Mohammedan villages the women were exposed to rape. While for the settlement of Mohammedan Bosnians in the evacuated Zeitun area 20,000 Lt. were remitted by the government, the Armenians were robbed of their belongings and sent away from home destitute.

Such measures, which are only matched by the deportations of the ancient Assyrians, can't be justified by military purposes, but come down to camouflaged massacres of Christians. Their range will presumably exceed the massacres of Abdul Hamid's time. I consider it my duty to point to the consequences of these Turkish measures.

1. As soon as the facts become known in Europe and America, they will not only – as the ambassador already presupposes in the despatch of June 4th – "stir great excitement throughout the world inimical to us and will be put to use against us" – they will also cause

indignation throughout the German Protestant Church, which can't be eased through even the most sincere sympathies for the Turkish people.

2. Through the current Turkish rulers' policy of annihilation in the entire Armenian nation (i.e. 2 million Russian and 2 million Turkish Armenians) a hatred is stirred against Turkey, which will only serve the interests of the Entente powers and will be highly harmful to Germany's influence on the economic development of Turkey, which for the largest part lies on the shoulders of the Armenians. Through Kilikia's cleansing of Armenians e.g. the German enterprises there (cotton societies etc.) are deprived of their complete labour force.

3. It is inevitable in a country whose government has always worked with the methods of terror that the policy of extermination drives the people concerned into terrorism too. One must not forget that the present government has a strong and dangerous opposition party among its Turkish and Arab subjects too, and that the hitherto loyal Turkish Armenians are driven into this opposition's arms. As the Turkish opposition (the liberal union) is joining the Entente, it is our urgent political interest not to drive the Turkish Armenians into a terrorist opposition and to remove them from German influence. About 120 Dashnakian leaders that were in fact loyal have been arrested and it must be feared they will all be executed. By eliminating these loyal intellectuals the terrorist elements among Russian Armenians will gain a free hand in Turkey, too. Through the respective envoys the loyal Armenian committees have asked the American, Bulgarian and Greek governments to use their influence in favour of the Armenians. The three unanimously replied that only the German government was in a position to steer against the trouble, as it is the only

institution that has some influence on the Turkish government and therefore is partly held responsible for the interior state of affairs in Turkey by other countries."¹⁷⁷ The German-Armenian society in Berlin, in which Lepsius, too, was a member, repeatedly sent in memoranda and reports to the imperial government to inform it about the goings-on in Anatolia.

When in August 1915 the German ambassador Wangenheim handed in a formal protest against the massacres, the Austrian ambassador Pallavicini reported to Vienna: "Yesterday's step taken by the German ambassador is obviously meant to provide ground for claiming that the Turkish government has been warned of the consequences of its policy against the Armenians, when some day the Armenian issue and Turkey's actions will come up."¹⁷⁸

On August 12th, 1915 Wangenheim's successor Hohenlohe wrote to Berlin: "The systematic slaughtering of the Armenian population deported from their homes had increased by such a degree in the previous months that it seemed necessary for us to make another urgent statement against these rabid goings-on that were not only tolerated, but seemingly supported by the government, as in some places the Christians of other races and denominations were not being spared any longer."¹⁷⁹ The other countries were also dealing with the problem. On August 7th, 1915 the German embassy in Istanbul reported to Berlin that the Armenian general Bogos Nubar Pasha was on his way from Egypt to Paris to urge the Entente to intervene¹⁸⁰ On the basis of their strong military

177 www.armenocide.de (22-6-1915).

178 Ohandjanian (1989), 218.

179 *Ibid.*

180 www.armenocide.de (7-8-1915).

presence in Turkey the Germans could easily have put the Young Turks and the army under massive pressure. This was never done so as not to anger the ally.

In Anglo-Saxon countries the atrocities against the Armenians were much more extensively discussed in public than in Germany, where severe press censorship prevailed. On October 6th, 1915 the goings-on in Turkey were discussed in the British House of Lords. Lord Cromer estimated the number of Armenians murdered until then to be 800,000. The respective Reuter news of October 6th, 1915 was passed on to the embassy in Istanbul on October 9th: "The House of Lords today discussed Armenian murders. Lord Cromer said 800,000 supposed to be murdered, thought it exaggerated. Germany due to influence in Constantinople morally responsible too; if Great Britain could do nothing else, it wanted to report fact. Crewe said on behalf government it was desirable that facts officially confirmed became known. British consulate reports brought deplorable state of things to light. (In) one district population except a few refugees entirely murdered. Many refugees said to have come to Caucasian provinces. 160,000 marched through one district. Condition of refugees terrible. Many starved to death. Russians help them, but if not more help comes, half will probably die. Government doesn't possess official report concerning German share of blame; American eye-witness told that German consulate representatives watched, then encouraged atrocities in Asia Minor. England told Turkish government to hold them responsible for atrocities, was useless. Investigation commission's chairwoman Bryce said don't think 800,000 exaggerated, almost entire nation annihilated. Only possibility to save the rest to give (the) whole world (a) piece of (our) mind; this will perhaps make (the) German

government hold back (the) Turks."¹⁸¹ In neutral Switzerland, too, a call for help for the Armenians was published in October 1915, saying: "Hundreds of thousands of Armenians have either been murdered already or must – deported from their mother country – perish miserably in the steppes of Mesopotamia or other areas. A large number of women and children in particular has been forced to convert to Islam."¹⁸²

On October 21st, 1915 the Prussian envoy to the Vatican reported that the pope, too, had intervened in Istanbul through the legate Dolci. The pope, too, was informed; in German reports to the Turks it is mentioned that the pope must be shown consideration.¹⁸³ On October 23rd, 1915 the papal legate Scapinelli spoke with foreign minister Burian in Vienna, declaring the amount of Armenians murdered until then to be 500,000. A comprehensive memorandum of Father Hofer of October 26th, 1915 says: "It must be stressed that the Turks themselves estimate the number of Armenians killed through massacres or privation to be 500,000, and the number of deportees to be 900,000."¹⁸⁴ On October 29th the *Norddeutsche Zeitung* ("North German Newspaper") reported that Lord Bryce had declared in his speech: "The Armenian massacres are not only worse than anything that happened in Belgium, but worse than any massacres reported of since the days of Tamburlaine".¹⁸⁵ In the World War, too, such statements were conveyed by the press and diplomacy, which proves that the great powers were informed about the goings-on very well. With German diplomats one gets the impression that on the

181 www.armenocide.de (9-1-1915).

182 www.armenocide.de (14-10-1915).

183 www.armenocide.de (21.10.1915).

184 Ohandjanian (1989), 109.

185 www.armenocide.de (29-10-1915).

lower level reports were quite correct; Ambassador Wangenheim, however, arguing in a purely political manner, often passed on "filtered" reports, and took part in war propaganda.

Internationally renowned historians and diplomats, too, report of the events in Turkey. From the American press, Theodore Roosevelt and Arnold Toynbee have already been mentioned. Here, above all the American ambassador Morgenthau deserves mentioning; he had been born in Germany and was the American ambassador in Istanbul from 1913 to 1916. In his books "Ambassador Morgenthau's Story. Memorial Edition" (1919) and "All my Lifetime" (1922) he reported of his conversations with Talaat, Enver and Wangenheim, and of the atrocities toward Greeks and Armenians. Due to the large number of American missionaries in Turkey and the USA's neutrality it becomes evident that the USA, too, were well informed about all goings-on. Ambassador Morgenthau relates this in his memoirs, which also extensively deal with the annihilation of the Greeks of Asia Minor, whose number is said to be "200,000 to 1 million."¹⁸⁶ In April 1915 he spoke with the German ambassador Wangenheim, who told him the Armenians were traitors; he would help the Zionists, but not lift a finger for the Armenians. Neither did Morgenthau get anywhere with the Austrian ambassador Pallavicini in this matter.¹⁸⁷

The British historian James Bryce, who had after travels of his own published his book "Transcaucasia and Ararat" as early as in 1878, collected reports of American missionaries about atrocities in Turkey in a "Blue Book" and on November 23rd, 1916 presented them to the House

186 Hofmann (2004), 18.

187 Ohandjanian (1989), 209.

of Commons. George Horton, the American consul in Smyrna, in his autobiography "The Blight of Asia" (1926) relates how the Turks after the deportation of the Greeks from Ionia in 1914 systematically destroyed the houses and vineyards of the Greeks. Among the English, chiefly the above mentioned historian Arnold Toynbee must be referred to, who worked in the English secret service and as early as in 1915 published the book "Armenian Atrocities. The Murder of a Nation" (London 1915). Together with Viscount Bryce he edited the book "The Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon". Middle east-expert Mark Sykes presented eye-witness accounts of the massacres of Armenians in Trabzon to the British king and government.¹⁸⁸

At the beginning of 1916 the "Times" published some leading articles to the effect that "the orgy of the murderers could have been stopped by a word from Germany."¹⁸⁹ Pope Benedict XV's efforts to prevent the massacres since July 1915 had been in vain; a hand-written letter from the pope to the sultan remained unanswered.¹⁹⁰ Armenians in Egypt turned to John Maxwell, the British supreme commander in Egypt, and proposed to him to land in Kilikia with volunteers from Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and America, and to help their fellow-believers. The English, however, rejected deploying volunteers. Such occurrences illustrate that the massacres of the Armenians were being discussed everywhere and drew the attention of intellectuals and humanists. The English, however, wanted to avoid using Muslim Egypt as a base against the Turks. Thanks to diplomats like Morgenthau, but also

188 Nassibian (1985), 83.

189 *Ibd.*, 85f.

190 *Ibd.* 89.

through journalists, missionaries and humanists the massacres of Christians became known throughout the political world. This led to the fact that on December 18th, 1916 the allied forces declared to the American president Wilson that they were determined to liberate the nations that were "subjected to the bloody tyranny of the Turks". The French foreign minister stated on January 10th, 1917: "The high aims of the war include the liberation of the nations presently subjected to the murderous tyranny of the Turks."¹⁹¹

Such remarks also raise the question which war aims the allied forces pursued with respect to the Christians in Turkey. At the beginning of the war there had been the "Armenian Legion". The Egyptian Armenian Boghos Nubar played an important part in the establishment of the "Légion d' Orient". Above all, Russia was eligible as a protective power of the Armenians. Yet as early as in 1915 the Russian ambassador told the British deputy secretary of state Arthur Nicolson that the Armenians were not aware of the fact that the tsar didn't want to have much to do with them and was not prepared to annex the Armenian Vilayets after a victory. Nor did they know that during the Sykes-Picot negotiations Russia had pressed for France to take over Sivas and Lower Armenia (Kilikia), as the tsar wanted to have as few Armenians as possible.¹⁹² The English, too, who were primarily interested in Iraqi oil fields, at first never declared that the liberation of subjected nations was among their war aims. They merely wanted to punish Turkey for her crimes; Lloyd George emphasised that the

191 Akcam (1996), 78.

192 L. Bruce Fulton: *France and the End of the Ottoman Empire*, in: *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire*, London-Boston-Sydney 1984, 141-171, here: 163f. and Nassibian (1985), 108.

day was to come when the Turks would have to pay for their inhumanity. Such vague promises tempted the Armenians to hope for their future independent state. A. Tchobinian, the secretary of the Armenian committee in Paris, thanked Lloyd George for his words and the "implementation of justice"! Boghos Nubar expressed his expectation that England would arrange for the restoration of Armenian unity. In November 1916 the English Prime Minister Asquith stated that after the war an era of freedom and relief would begin for the Armenians.¹⁹³ At the end of 1916 the Entente decided to land in Kilikia with the assistance of the *Légion d'Orient* and promised an autonomous Kilikia under French protectorate. Boghos Nubar published his London agreement with Georges Picot and Mark Sykes of October 27th, 1916 that after a victory of the allied forces the "national aspirations" of the Armenians would be satisfied.¹⁹⁴ Boghos Nubar knew that the Russians wanted the three Vilayets lost in 1878 to be returned to them. The other Vilayets were to be united with Kilikia to gain access to the Mediterranean, and come under French protectorate. In a conversation with Arnold Toynbee in October 1917 Boghos Nubar said his only fear was that after Russia's renouncement of annexations the Turks could conquer these areas. A few days later the October Revolution broke out, which led to the exposing of the Russian frontline with Turkey. Armenian volunteers from Egypt, Europe and America were to fight for a free Armenia with the greatest autonomy possible. Reality would be different though – especially as the Russian Revolution profoundly changed the situation in the Middle East. The problem of the liberation of the

193 *Ibd.*, 109f.

194 *Ibd.*, 10.

Armenians after the Russian Revolution was to prove extremely complex. In December 1917 the Armenian military defence committee in the Caucasus told the British consulate in Tbilisi that Armenia was in danger of coming under Turkish rule. The committee asked for the cooperation of Russia, England, France and the USA to see to it that it would be autonomous under the protection of the western powers.¹⁹⁵ Although the allied forces always spoke of Armenian autonomy, but avoided defining the status more clearly after the end of the war.

11. The Deportations of the Greeks until the End of the War

In his memoirs of 1918 the American diplomat Henry Morgenthau reports of the sufferings of the Greek minority in Turkey: "The Armenians are not the only suppressed people in Turkey, which has suffered from this policy of turning Turkey into a country of Turks exclusively. The history I have to relate about the Armenians I could – with some modifications – tell about the Greeks and the Syrians, too. Indeed the Greeks were the first victims of this idea of nationalisation. ...Possibly as the civilised world didn't make any protest against these deportations, the Turks decided afterwards to apply the same method - on a larger scale – not only on Greeks, but also on Armenians, Syrians, Nestorians and other subjected nations of Turkey...

The Greek martyrdom consequently comprises two periods: one before the war and one beginning in 1915. The first one above all affected Greeks on the coast of Asia Minor, the second one those in Thracia and in the regions on the Marmara Sea, the Dardanelles, on the Bosphorus and on the coast of the Black Sea. The latter

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 112.

were sent to the interior of Asia Minor in numbers of several hundred thousand. The Turks applied almost exactly the same methods they had used with the Armenians. They incorporated the Greeks in the Ottoman army and then put them into forced-labour battalions, used them for building roads in the Caucasus and at other theatres of war. Like the Armenians, these Greek soldiers died of cold, hunger and other privations by the thousands. The same house searches for illegal weapons took place in Greek as well as in Armenian villages, and Greek men and women were beaten and tortured like their Armenian fellow sufferers. The Greeks were exposed to the same arbitrary requisitioning, which in their case like with the Armenians turned into gigantic plundering. The Turks tried to force the Greek subjects to become Mohammedans; both Greek and Armenian girls were robbed and deported to Turkish harems, and Greek boys were kidnapped and put into Muslim households. ... Everywhere the Greeks were rounded up in throngs and under the so-called protection of Turkish gendarmes – largely on foot – driven to the interior country. How many were dispersed in this way has not been finally figured out. Estimations vary from 200,000 to 1 million. The caravans suffered great privations, but were not exposed to general massacres like the Armenians. ... The Turks did not treat them with more consideration for any motive of pity... at that time there was the general expectation among the Teutonic allies that Greece would join the Entente in the war, and a regular massacre of Greeks in Asia Minor would undoubtedly have created a mood in Greece that would have rendered it impossible for its pro-German king to keep the country out of the war. So it was merely state policy that saved those Greek subjects of Turkey from all the horrors that Armenians were stricken by. Yet their sufferings are awful and make up

one further chapter in the long history of crimes that the civilised world will call Turkey to account for."¹⁹⁶ Among the refugees who had tried to escape the Turkish massacres of Greeks as early as in 1914 is the family of the later Greek Nobel Prize winner Giorgios Seferis, who was born in Smyrna in 1900. Among these refugees there is also Elia Kazan (Kasaniođlu), who was born as the son of a carpet trader in Constantinople in 1909. In 1913 he came to the USA with his parents and immortalized the history of his uncle's flight from Anatolia in the film "America, America" in 1963.

The Greeks in Turkey were of course in a quite different situation than the Armenians. They had the Kingdom of Greece as their mother country to back them up, and it was in diplomatic contact with Turkey and ran eight consulates there. From there reports were regularly sent to the foreign ministry in Athens. These reports provide quite clear evidence of the massacres of Greeks and Armenians. The Greek-Orthodox Church was a further link, even though the major part of Greece was autocephalic and under the direction of the archbishop of Athens, who was not placed under the patriarch. The Crete-stemming Prime Minister Eleutherios Venizelos had pushed through the union of Crete and Greece in 1905/08 and represented the "Megale idea" of the liberation of all Greeks from foreign rule. His aim of regaining Constantinople clashed with Russian claims to the "second Rome" and could – after a successful action against Turkey – only have been realized against the Russians.¹⁹⁷ The British foreign minister Edward Grey

196 Henry Morgenthau: *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (2003) and Hofmann: *Mit einer Stimme* (2004), 17.

197 Michael W. Weithmann: *Griechenland. Vom Frühmittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, Regensburg 1994, 215f.

offered him Smyrna in Asia Minor as a reward for entering the war, which the prime minister accepted – quite in opposition to King Constantine I. In 1915 there was the break with Constantine I, when England urged Venizelos to join the Entente and held out the prospect of compensations in Asia Minor. Venizelos had to step down, but after a putsch in 1916 formed a counter-government in French-occupied Thessalonica and thanks to British-French intervention forced the king into abdication in June 1917.

The first wave of persecution of Greeks in 1913/14 was really the beginning of the Young Turkish scheme of annihilating non-Turkish minorities.¹⁹⁸ They wanted to provoke the Greeks to go to war against the Germans. With this they believed to have a pretext to exterminate the Greeks in the same manner as the Armenians.¹⁹⁹ The Young Turks, however, had to expect an intervention by Greece, if they had massacred the Greeks in the same manner as the Armenians. The deportation of women and children and the transport of men to labour brigades and their eventual murder worked in the same way with the Greeks as with the Armenians. At the beginning of October 1915 the German marine attaché Hans Humann reported to the German general Erich von Falkenheyn that Enver Pasha had told him the Young Turkish Committee (CUP) was planning "to complete the genocide of the Armenians with the annihilation of Greek elements even during the war."²⁰⁰ From the beginning, Greece had been friends with Serbia and considered the tsar to be the patron of orthodoxy. Operating from Russian Armenia, the tsarist army managed to conquer

198 Hassiotis (1992), 135f.

199 *Ibid.*, 138.

200 *Ibid.*, 139

Trabzon on April 4th, 1916, and thus to advance into the area of the so-called Pontus Greeks. This led to quick measures by the Turks to deport the Greeks from these regions.

With the justification that a Greek insurgence was imminent, the Turks began with the expulsion of the Greeks from Pontus in April 1916. A report of the Greek embassy in St. Petersburg to the foreign office in Athens says: "The inhabitants of 16 villages of the Wassilona area within the district of Trabzon – all of them Greeks – had to move to the interior of Agirupoli on the order of Turkish military authorities. However, for fear of being slaughtered on their way – as it had been the case with the Armenians – they have left their homes and fled to the woods, in the hope of soon being rescued by a possible advance of the Russian army. From these inhabitants, whose number is about 6,000, 650 sought refuge in the monastery of Wassilona, where 1,500 refugees from Trabzon had already been put up. 1,200 have squeezed themselves into a large cave in the village of Kunaka, the rest is spread across the caves in the forests and other hiding-places."²⁰¹ Greek houses were looted by the Turkish army; the refugees in the cave of Kunaka had to surrender due to starvation, and 26 young women jumped into the river near the village of Gefira to escape being raped. The German vice consul Kuckhoff of Samsun reported to Berlin on June 15th, 1916: "Reliable sources have informed us that the entire Greek population of Sinope and the coastal areas of Kastamuni has been exiled. Exile and extermination mean the same in Turkish, for who doesn't get killed usually dies of disease or

201 Konstantin Fotiadis: *Der Völkermord an den Griechen des Pontos*, in: Tessa Hofmann: *Verfolgung, Vertreibung...* (2004), 185-219, here 187.

hunger anyway."²⁰² The coastal area of Giresun was destroyed; 100,000 Greeks on the coast were in acute danger. The Russian siege of Tripoli (Tirebolu) was used by the Turks as a pretext to deport the Greeks of Giresun and Tripoli. The deportation march to the village of Birk, where 500 Armenian families had been slaughtered the year before, took 25 days. From 13, 000 deportees a mere 800 arrived at Birk.²⁰³

The actions of the Turks in Pontus didn't remain unknown to the foreign powers either. The American ambassador Morgenthau denounced Turkey's inhuman actions. His successor Abraham Elkus, who took over his position in 1916, spoke with the Austrian ambassador Karl zu Trautmannsdorf-Wernberg about the goings-on, who justified the Turkish measures. At the end of 1916 the Austrian ambassador Pallavicini reported on the events in Samsun: "December 11th, 1916. Five Greek villages were looted, then burned down. Their inhabitants were deported. December 12th, 1916. In the city's neighbourhood further villages are burned down. Entire villages along with schools and churches are set on fire. December 17th, 1916. They have burned down 11 villages in the Samsun district. The lootings continue. The villagers are maltreated. December 31st, 1916. Some 18 villages were burned down completely, 15 partly. About 60 women were raped. Even churches have been looted."²⁰⁴ The Austrians considered the Germans to be partly responsible for what had happened. In a telegram of the German embassy to Consul Friedrich Wilhelm von der Schulenburg it was pointed out that the Turkish district governors had the message spread that now what had happened to the

202 *Ibd.*, 186.

203 *Ibd.*, 188f.

204 *Ibd.*, 187.

Armenians was repeating itself. All these horrors didn't prevent Emperor William II – who had awarded never Enver Pasha the *Ordre de la Mérite* in 1916 – to visit Turkey a second time. A Greek commission for the clearing up of the forced conversions to Islam including the headmaster P. Kinigopoulos reports how Greek women were forced to convert to Islam and then vanished in Turkish harems. Ernst von Kwiatkowski, the Austrian consul of Samsun, asked ambassador Pallavicini to give up his restraint. The ambassador conveyed his concern to Foreign Minister Halil Bey, who justified this with Greek cooperation with the Russians. From 51,660 Greek inhabitants of the Kolonia region only a third survived.

Greek deportations, in which the German general Liman von Sanders took part, were continuing in the war year 1917, too. On April 3rd, 1917 the Austrian chargé d'affaires in Istanbul, Count Trautmannsdorf, reported to Vienna: "The great vizier and the foreign minister have asked me and the German ambassador to inform our governments that military purposes of vital importance obliged the Ottoman government to evacuate the population of Aivali and its environment." 30,000 people from the city of Aivali, which is situated opposite to Lesbos, were deported, 60,000, on the other hand, from Samsun. The reconnaissance service of the French general staff reported that here primarily women and children were being deported, who for the major part died of typhoid fever. "Another year of this regime", the French report says, "and Turkey becomes the graveyard of the entire Christian population".²⁰⁵ Since November 1915 Greeks and Armenians had jointly been forming resistance cells, which became active especially after the collapse of the Russian frontline in the Caucasus.

205 Tsirkinidis, in: Hofmann: *Verfolgung, Vertreibung...* (2004), 142f.

England was informed of the horrors, too. A 1918 memorandum of the British embassy in Berne about the mistreating of Greeks in Turkey says: "Day after day Greeks are deported from Constantinople and its environment and are taken to the interior of the country. Their possessions are confiscated and everything they owned is auctioned. Women and girls are distributed among German officers and prominent Muslims. In Asian Turkey the situation is even worse. All villages around Smyrna, Karassos and so on have been looted, with the Germans bearing a large share of the responsibility. It is estimated that more than 3,000 Greeks have been enslaved in Constantinople. But in Asian Turkey, they say, more than 100,000 have been murdered or have starved to death since August last year."²⁰⁶ Emanuel Eliades, a high-ranking representative of the Greek refugees, telegraphed to the British Foreign Ministry on December 10th, 1918: "The last remnants of the deported Greek population of the coast of Asia Minor, which consist of women, children and old men, are in the most wretched condition. They are homeless, without food and clothes, devoid of everything. From 8,000 people that once lived in Ephesus, only 600 have returned, and we think it impossible that the number of survivors could be above 1,000. The rest have died as martyrs. The population of the village of Ak-Bük is almost annihilated. There is devastation everywhere. Due to the blockade of the Entente we are not in a position to help them."²⁰⁷ There was no atonement for any of these crimes. In the short-lived liberal era after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire there were some war crimes trials in Turkey in 1919. The protocol of the so-called "Trabzon

206 *Ibd.*, 144.

207 *Ibd.*

Trial" has been preserved; it only relates to atrocities against the Armenians, however.²⁰⁸

The liberation came with the advance of the Entente troops. After the October Revolution and the peace treaty between the middle powers and Russia (March 3rd, 1918) the Turks still had reconquered Turkish Armenia in August 1916. On November 25th, 1917 Catholicos Shimun XIX summoned East Syrian and Armenian army leaders, who decided to form a common army. He established contacts with the British, who had reached the Turkish border in Palestine from Egypt as early as in 1916. In 1917 Jerusalem and Baghdad fell, in 1918 Mossul was taken. Catholicos Shimun XIX was murdered by the Kurdish leader Ismael Agha Simko on March 3rd, 1918. His nephew Mar Poulos Shimun XX became his successor. With English support Agha Petros withstood Turkish attacks in Urmia until June 1918. When the East Syrians withdrew to Hamadan in a forced march of 500 kms, about one third of the 70,000 refugees perished through hunger, epidemics and Kurdish assaults.²⁰⁹

On January 18th, 1918 the American president Woodrow Wilson published his famous "14 points", in which it is said about Turkey: "XII.: The Turkish portion of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but other nationalities which are not under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous

208 Taner Akcam: *Armenien und der Völkermord. Die Istanbul Prozesse und die türkische Nationalbewegung*, Hamburg 1996, 176-184.

209 Wilhelm Baum – Dietmar W. Winkler: *Die apostolische Kirche des Ostens. Geschichte der sogenannten Nestorianer*, Klagenfurt 2000, 121f.

development."²¹⁰ An interpretation of this explicitly says that Armenia must get a port at the Mediterranean and be put under the protection of a great power, preferably England or France.²¹¹ Wilson could also imagine American protectorship of Armenia.

After the dissolution of the tsarist army, in 1918 the motley Armenian militia, consisting of volunteer units and Armenian fractions of the Russian army was on its own in facing the Turks alongside a frontline of 400 kms. In the unequal battle against an enemy tenfold superior the Armenians were driven back as far as the East Armenian borders, but managed to hold the area around the capital Erivan and Lake Sevan. In April 1918 Armenian, Georgian and Aserbeidhshanian parties formed the "Trans-Caucasian Democratic Federative Republic", which, however, fell apart soon. On May 26th, 1918 Georgia declared its independence, former Russian Armenia one day later. On May 24th, 1918 the Armenians defeated the Turks near Sardarabata, but only on June 4th the Turks dictated an austere peace treaty to the new state. In July 1918 after the death of his brother Mehmed VI ascended the throne as the last sultan, however, without being able to exercise any political influence. In September 1918 the Turks managed to advance as far as Baku, where they slaughtered 30,000 Armenians. In October 1918 there was the downfall of the Young Turkish triumvirate. The new government had to agree to the armistice of Mudros, which designed the demobilisation of the Ottoman army. The allied forces occupied the strategically important points of the empire. The Tevfik

210 Here quoted after: Fotiadis, in: Hofmann: Verfolgung, Vertreibung...(2004), 2154, note 24.

211 Arthur Walworth: Wilson and his Peacemakers. American Diplomacy and the Paris Peace Conference, 1919, London 1986, 488.

Pasha government prohibited the "Ittihat" (CUP) on February 2nd, 1919. On May 18th, 1919 Dashnakian-governed Armenia declared the annexation of Turkish Armenia, which was confirmed in the peace treaty of Sèvres on August 10th, 1919.

12. The Situation of the Christians in Turkey until the End of World War One (1916-1918)

In 1916 and 1917 most Armenians deported to the deserts of Syria and Iraq died. The deportees were driven to Ras-ul-Ajn and Der-es-Sor on the Euphrates in present-day North Syria. Until October 1915 300,000 Armenians – mostly women and children - had been driven from Aleppo as far as the North Syrian Desert. The survivors often died of epidemic diseases, hunger and exhaustion, or were slaughtered by the Turks or Kurds. They were put into genuine concentration camps, where food and shelter were lacking. Here they were just allowed to stay as long as they still possessed anything; then they were driven into the desert toward Mossul. In April 1916 Ali Suad, the Turkish supreme commander of Der-es-Sor received the order to reduce the amount of local Armenians to 10% of the population.²¹² Eventually Ali Suad was dismissed for being "too mild", and replaced by the Tcherkessian Sekki Bey, who had the Christians murdered systematically by Tcherkessian gangs. Other Christian groups were driven into the concentration camps in the swamps of Konya. By the end of summer 1916 the concentration camps on the Euphrates had been "emptied". Now the survivors of the work battalions, too, had to convert to Islam to save their lives. In all, from the 1,845 450 Armenians (not counting the "unified" and the Protestants) still living here according to Lepsius and the

212 Hofmann: *Deutsche Quellen* (1984), 10.

Armenian patriarchate in the Ottoman Empire, about 244,000 were able to flee over the Caucasus or to Egypt. Approximately 1.4 million Armenians were deported, one million of which perished. In the second edition of his book Lepsius in 1919 mentioned an amount of 1.1 million killed.²¹³ Sven Hedin, who had been in Der-es-Sor in 1917, in his book "Baghdad, Babylon, Ninive" (Leipzig 1918) estimates the number of murdered Armenians at only 500,000 and is therefore quoted by Turkish propaganda to the present day.²¹⁴ In the "British Encyclopaedia", too, this sum is still mentioned today.²¹⁵

After the Armenians it was the Greeks' turn. The Russian conquest of Trabzon in April 1916 was the occasion for starting the deportations of the Pontus Greeks. In December 1916 the Austrian ambassador Pallavicini reported the deportation of the Greeks of Samsun. On October 27th, 1916 the Sykes-Picot-agreement – which intended the division of Syrian and Arab possessions between England and France - was signed in London. In the process, the recruitment of Armenian volunteers by France was planned. Additionally, France was explicitly allotted the Vilayet Adana.²¹⁶ Until November 1916, up to 5,000 Armenians in Egypt let themselves be conscripted for the "Armenian Legion" (which was officially subordinated to the French Oriental legion) by the USA. When in 1920 France came to an

213 *Ibid.*, 114 Mansfield Peter: A History of the Middle East, , 2. ed. By Nicolas Pelham, New York-London 2003, 150: " Hundreds of thousands were killed, and many more died of hunger, exposure and disease. Between one and a quarter and one and a half million perished."

214 E.g. the website of the Turkish ministry of culture (www.Kulturtrizm.gov.tr/portal/default_de.)

215 Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. 1, 15th ed., Chicago 1993, 66-67.

216 Ternon (1981), 227f.

arrangement with the Kemalists, it lost its interest in the legion. Thanks to Arnold Toynbee's "Blue Book" and the publications of Johannes Lepsius the issue of the Armenian massacres remained a topic of discussion.

After the deportation of the Armenians to Mesopotamia the Turks tried to abolish the patriarchates of Constantinople and Sis and to stop the connection to the Catholicos of Edschmiadzin. The patriarch of Constantinople was transferred to Jerusalem. The local German consul Brode communicated this to Imperial Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg on November 14th, 1916: "The new regulation concerning the Armenian patriarchate... of August 29th of this year ... has come as a surprise to local Armenian circles and must annoy for the simple reason that with this regulation the Turkish government deliberately ignores the guarantees given to the Armenian Church in the statute of May 24th, 1860. In its final article 99 it had been explicitly stated that a potential revision of the basic regulations necessary due to experience or time would not be carried out without the consultation of a committee of priests and laymen. The two essential points of the new regulation are the separation of the Armenians from their Russian head and the removal of the Church's centre to Jerusalem. From a Turkish point of view, the first measure is understandable after the part the Armenians played during the Russian advance in the Caucasus, but will at heart be refused by all followers of the "Christian Apostolic Church of the Armenians" as a violent destruction of the unity of their Church.

The Edschmiadzin monastery was chosen as the see by the chief apostle of the Armenians and founder of their national church, Gregory the Enlightened, as early as in the 3rd century; since then it has – apart from a longer

interruption due to political conditions – been the permanent see of the head of the Armenian Church. It was generally agreed that the four remaining church dignitaries, the Catholicoi of Aghthamar and Sis and the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem were subordinated to the pan-Armenian Catholicos in Edschmiadzin. While Aghthamar has never been of particular importance, Sis – when after the Seldchukian conquest of old Kilikian Armenia a new body politic and church came into being through Armenian immigration – became the see of the Catholicos for one and a half centuries, until in 1441 a National Council summoned in Edschmiadzin decided to restore the Catholicate there. As the then Catholicos of Sis refused to move his see to Edschmiadzin, a new Catholicos was elected for that place, and the Catholicate of Sis survived as the part Catholicate of Kilikia, with its authority and jurisdiction restricted to this province, alternately acknowledged and rejected by the Catholicoi of Edschmiadzin.

The patriarchate of Jerusalem seems to have owed its special position to the Egyptian occupation after the crusades, and has - as a diocese - always had an importance limited to the province of Palestine. In church matters it has always acknowledged Edschmiadzin's supremacy. The patriarchate in Constantinople was founded by Muhammad II Fatih, who gave the new patriarch similar authority as the Greek one. Since last century the patriarch of Constantinople had also been acknowledged as the vicar of the Catholicos of Edschmiadzin and mediated the connection of the church to the head of the Armenian Church in Edschmiadzin, which is sacred due to Apostolic tradition. Through § 1 of the new regulation the Catholicate of Sis and ... the patriarchate of Constantinople are really abolished and

the patriarch of Jerusalem, who is given the title Catholicos at the same time...and has to reside in Jerusalem... rests as the sole representative of the church. This removal of the Church's focus to Jerusalem, where there is just a diminutive Armenian colony, clearly illustrates the intention of the Turkish government to strip (the) religious life (of Armenians) of all its national character. The new head is assigned a place where it may be religiously active at random, but cannot really be tempted to pursue any political aims by abusing his religious influence. The whole guideline is – if such a drastic comparison is permitted – similar to a German government that – as the empire is at war with Italy – would depose the pope and appoint some German bishop counter pope in some Protestant city. Of course even the clerical and administrative work of the new Catholicos-Patriarch will be made more difficult as Jerusalem is far away from his diocese and the superior state authorities. Further points of the new regulation that must anger Armenian cycles are the restrictions of laymen's participation in the election and possible dismissal of the Catholicos-Patriarch... That Armenians might give vent to their indignation is, however, completely out of the question at present. Due to brutal persecution they are so intimidated that each of them takes care not in any way to emphasise his Armenian identity, be it on a religious or national level. I have even noticed that local Armenians do everything to avoid contact with the clergy.... As for the role of the former patriarch of Constantinople, Ormanian, who Your Honour inquired about earlier, he had been sent to Jerusalem by the Armenian National Assembly to head the...new election. ...The appointment of the Catholicos of Sis, Wortherrossahak, was not in his interest at all, as it meant an end to his previous authority. At least he has managed

to be on friendly terms with his successor... Wortherrossahak, on the other hand, seems to be a morose character, and apparently feels very dejected because of the sufferings of his fellow-believers and countrymen. Of course, the recurrent news from East Jordan about the forced conversion of local Armenian deportees to Islam is especially painful to him. ... Contrary to Turkish attempts at denial, these conversions are continued even now, as I know from reliable sources. The Armenian question will possibly also be an issue in the peace negotiations. I would think it regrettable if we overdid our friendship with Turkey to such an extent that we would excuse their atrocities against the Armenians. What we can do for a solution of the problem in detail, I am ...unable to judge, but in my modest view the German Empire as a Christian ally of Turkey, should – as soon as the situation permits it – be the first power to take steps against anti-Christian tendencies in Turkey. The proclamation of the holy war has proved quite a double-edged sword to us."²¹⁷

The Catholicos of Sis at first resided in Aleppo, later in Antelias near Beirut. In the Lebanon and in later-day Syria many Armenians survived the massacres. The Turks, however, failed to destroy the old structure of the Armenian Church for good; it has managed to hold its ground in the Lebanon, in Syria, Russian Armenia and Aserbeidshan to the present day.

In February 1917 there was the revolution in Russia; with this, Russian pressure on East Turkey ended. At the same time, however, the English advanced against the Turks from the Persian Gulf; on March 1st Baghdad was taken. In October 1917 six Armenian battalions refused the Russian army to march toward Persia; the Armenian

committee in St. Petersburg decided first to wait and see what would happen to the Armenian territory. 150,000 Armenians had fought in the tsarist army, but they were disappointed with the Russians.²¹⁸ After the October Revolution a new Caucasian government formed itself under the leadership of the Socialists on November 24th, 1917. Peace negotiations between now Bolshevik Russia and the middle powers began in Brest-Litowsk. Due to the USA's entry into the war on the side of the Entente on April 20th, 1917 the Entente's predominance over the middle powers was gradually increasing. Still in winter 1917/28 England earnestly considered making peace with Turkey. The middle powers, however, initially profited by the crumbling of Russian power.

On March 18th, 1918 Germany forced Bolshevik Russia to accept the peace treaty of Brest-Litowsk, which brought a totally new situation for Turkey. The three eastern provinces of Kars, Ardahan and Batumi were meant to decide their future in a public referendum, but were soon occupied by the Turks. When Russian troops dissolved on the Turkish front, Armenian brigades formed themselves under General Andranik, defending a front of 375 kms with 20,000 men. After the armistice between Russians and Turks of November 30th, 1917, the north-eastern part of Turkey from Trabzon as far as Lake Van was officially still occupied by the Russians, but without military protection. Until the end of 1917 the British had occupied those areas of the Ottoman Empire they intended to keep after the war. On February 9th, 1918 the Austrian consulate reported to Vienna that Enver Pasha had ordered the Turkish invasion of the eastern provinces.²¹⁹ On February 14th, 1919 the Turkish advance

218 Nassibian (1985), 96f.

219 Ohandjanian (1989), 131.

into the demilitarised Russian provinces Kars, Ardahan and Batumi began. Trabzon was taken with the help of the Greek metropolitan; therefore persecution of Christians diminished there. Within two months the Turks reached the old border of 1877, which they crossed afterwards. The Transcaucasians (Georgians, Armenians and Aserbeidshanians) wanted to agree to a peace treaty with Turkey only on the condition that Germany would be included. On March 13th, 1918 the Turks took Ardahan, where they slaughtered 7,000 Armenians, on April 14th they also took Batumi. In all, 8,500 Armenians were murdered during the Turkish advance. An Armenian delegation appeared in Berlin on April 22nd, 1918 to achieve a German intervention; they got nothing but vague promises of help.

Germany was working for a Transcaucasian state independent from Russia and above all supported the Georgians. In January 1918 elections to a Transcaucasian parliament took place. The three nations jointly announced their secession from Russia. When the Turks continued their advance, the confederation disintegrated again. The Armenians were not particularly interested in seceding from Russia. On April 22nd, 1918 the "Transcaucasian Republic" – consisting of Georgia, Armenia and Aserbeidshan - was proclaimed in Tbilisi, and on the same day concluded an armistice with Turkey. Germany primarily backed Georgia, which soon declared itself independent. Thus in former Russian Armenia the "Republic of Armenia" and the "Republic of Georgia" were proclaimed on May 28th, 1918. Germany acknowledged the "Republic of Georgia" and established a military mission in Tbilisi. Georgia was meant to become a buffer state between Russia and Turkey. On May 5th, 1918 peace negotiations with the Turks began in Batumi. Armenia soon was compelled to ward off a Turkish

advance along a 400 km-frontline all on its own and with weak means of defence.

When Armenian finance minister Katisian was staying in Constantinople for negotiations, minister Talaat told him that in the state council Enver Pasha had taken the view "that the Armenians have always been and will always remain the enemies of the Turks. Nor will they ever leave the Anatolian borders in peace. It would therefore be better to annihilate them in the Caucasus as profoundly as in Turkey. Moreover, a small Caucasian Armenia would always try to expand its borders. Therefore Armenia would always pose a threat to Turkey. Talaat said he had replied to Pasha that it was impossible to put this proposal into practice; after all there were 2 million Armenians living in the Caucasus and they could not all be exterminated. "It would therefore be wiser to satisfy them, because, even if a mere 100,000 Armenians survived the slaughter, they would never leave Turkey in peace. Moreover, if we establish a small Armenia, we will have solved the Armenian question, which would be of advantage to us in the peace negotiations with the allied forces." On Germany's council, the Armenians eventually had to agree to an austere armistice in Batumi on June 4th, 1918. Thousands fled from the territories occupied by the Turks. A considerable part of the west had to be left to Turkey, which also gained the right to march through Aserbeidshan. However, the German government soon got word of the new Turkish atrocities. On May 28th it asked the Austrian foreign minister to hand in a protest to the Turkish government, because once more Armenian men were murdered and Caucasian Christians were subject to the violence of Turks and Tatars. It was, the German government said, impossible to answer for the misuse of the treaty of Brest as a "carte blanche for the persecution of Christians in the Caucasus". Germany

acknowledged the Georgian government and asked the Turks "to ensure adequate treatment of the Armenians in territories occupied by Turkey."²²⁰ When the Austrian ambassador handed in literally the same protest to Talaat, it turned out that the German Supreme Command sort of pursued a policy of its own and backed the Turks. On June 1st the Austrian ambassador reported it had been wrong to abandon the eastern provinces – that had been governed by Russia since 1917 – to an "inferior culture". The German colonel Kress von Kressenstein in July 1918 asked Imperial Chancellor Hertling to "as soon as possible and with all means available put energetic pressure on Turkey to immediately withdraw its troops from Armenia."²²¹ In his book "Mit den Türken zum Suezkanal" ("To the Suez Canal with the Turks") published in Berlin in 1938 Kress among other things wrote about a conversation with the Catholicos in Erivan, who passionately accused Germany of bearing part of the blame for the massacres. Austria acted with some restraint, but didn't take any steps toward speaking up for the Armenians and Greeks to the Germans.

Did the British really want to help Armenia or did they just use the massacres as a most welcome means of propaganda against Turkey and Germany, so as to exhort the USA and other neutral countries to enter the war? In the 19th century England had never had any direct interest in Armenia and supported Turkey as a buffer against Russia. In 1915 Russia had been promised Constantinople and the straits. In 1918 the British government tried to come to an arrangement with Turkey. To Britain, it was primarily a matter of Mesopotamia and oil; should concessions to Turkey be

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 151f.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 220.

necessary, one referred them rather to the northern territories, i.e. Armenia. On the other hand, due to the world's compassion for Armenia's lot, pressure upon the British increased to ease Armenia's suffering. They therefore agreed to divide Armenian territory between Russia and France (Kilikia). Lloyd George repeatedly emphasised that a politician didn't need to feel bound by promises; England's main interest was in the gulf and the securing of the sea route to India; furthermore, there had to be some consideration for the Muslim population of the Empire.

In the course of the war the British cabinet was compelled to specify its conception of the fate of the Armenians after the war. At the end of June 1917 the cabinet committed itself to no longer leaving Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine under Turkish rule. At the end of 1917 foreign minister Balfour proposed that the USA should take over the protectorate of an autonomous Armenia.²²² Another member of the government suggested an autonomous Armenia should become a part of the Russian confederation. Fundamentally, the government was not interested in the future of the Armenians. Ramsey McDonald, the leader of the Labour opposition, in July 1918 asked Foreign Minister Balfour whether the government was paying any attention to Armenian resistance and was seeing to it that Armenia would be given the right of self-determination after the war.²²³ The government tried to reassure the opposition. Balfour only a few days later assured Boghos Nubar that Armenia's liberation was one of the allied forces' war aims.

²²² Nassibian (1985), 120.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 114f.

Germany's chief interest lay in Georgia. Therefore the Armenians chiefly turned to Austria, whose support they thought more likely. Germany left it to Austria to occupy Armenia, yet the Austrian ambassador warned against making Armenia "the monarchy's first colonial territory." On July 30th, 1918 the Armenian envoys in Constantinople handed the Austrian ambassador a request for recognition of their republic. The Germans sent troops to Georgia to stop the advance of the Turks. During a clash of the allied armies the Turks took Germans prisoner and killed them. In mid July 1918 an Armenian delegation came to Berlin to ask the German government to support and occupy the country. The Austrian foreign minister told the ambassador in Berlin that some 30,000 Armenian refugees had been given makeshift shelter in Tbilisi, and that Bishop Mesrop had declared the situation of the approximately 500,000 refugees in the Erivan area to be desperate.²²⁴ The German and Austrian governments, however, were not willing to seriously deal with this problem, as they feared complications with the Turks. They only criticised that Turkey would lose its Mesopotamian and Syrian possessions, while pursuing an aggressive policy of expansion in the Caucasus. On August 4th, 1918 the Austrian delegate Franckenstein informed Ambassador Pallavicini about the conditions in the young republic "that Armenia can only be saved from going under through quick help from the middle powers. At present, Armenia cannot even feed its settled population, to say nothing of the 300 to 500,000 refugees... Armenia is only viable with the borders of Brest, without the alterations aimed at by Turkey."²²⁵

The German government did not want to commit itself in Armenia, but hinted it would accept Austrian

224 Ohandjanian (1989), 155.

225 *Ibid.*, 160.

commitment. Thus in the last months of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy there was once more the opportunity of an Austrian commitment in the Orient, which would have been welcomed by the Armenians. The government in Vienna was considering such an intervention. On August 12th, 1918 Legation Councillor Karl von Trautmannsdorf was instructed to find out the preconditions for sending troops. In a conference in Erivan on August 31st, 1918 Turkey, Germany, Austria and Armenia negotiated on a return of Armenian refugees to the Armenian territory occupied by the Turks. Germany only wanted to recognize Armenia in accordance with the Soviet Union, which spoke out against independence of Armenia, saying it was too small for it. Consequently, Austrian diplomacy also recommended restraint to the government. Before his departure to Berlin Talaat Pasha told the Armenians that Germany only recognized Georgia; he offered them possible enlargement of their territory.²²⁶ In Berlin he also spoke with the German government about the necessity of solving the Armenian problem prior to a peace treaty with the Entente. Armenia negotiated with Austria about recognition of their country by the Soviet Union. The Russians, however, declared they would only recognize Armenia if Turkey withdrew to the borders of the time before the peace of Batumi. On September 7th, 1918 the Armenian plenipotentiary Dr. Ohandjanian came to Vienna to negotiate on a further commitment of Austria. A call for help from Catholicos George V of August 3rd to Emperor Charles was handed to the monarch on September 17th.²²⁷ One passage says: "As the head of the oldest Oriental Church and shepherd of a people that has from ancient times asserted its

226 *Ibd.*, 165.

227 *Ibd.*, 169f.

Christian belief and its unshakable faith to Christianity through all horrors and numerous bloody deeds, I turn to Your Majesty with the urgent request to confer Your most gracious help on the ailing people and work on Austria-Hungary's ally Turkey in an adequate manner, so as to put an end to the unfathomable suffering of the Armenian people." The Austrian foreign minister, however, only counselled to write one of those innumerable letters of complaint to the Turkish government, which had produced no effect in the previous decades.

In the meantime the Turks tried to advance to Baku. War minister Enver Pasha propagated "Turanism", the unification of all Turkish-stemming peoples as far as Central Asia. Armenia was therefore of great importance as an access to Aserbeidshan. The Turks – with their forces tenfold superior – attacked young Armenia. On September 14th, 1918 they advanced as far as Baku, where they slaughtered 30,000 Armenians; half of the Armenian population fled from the city. The Turks also invaded Dagestan and North Persia. This was the last victory of the Ottoman army, in which a large number of German officers were active in leading positions. In all, another nearly 500,000 Armenians lost their lives in these massacres and the ensuing famines and epidemics. The number of Armenian refugees rose to 850,000, some 500,000 of them in the Erivan region. The Ottoman state, however, was at its end on all other fronts; the British marched into Jerusalem from Egypt.

Before its conclusion, there had been some Turkish proposals for an armistice, chiefly from oppositional politicians though. The sultan, too, submitted an offer to the English ambassador Rumbold in Berne on October

5th, 1918, but he made no proposals concerning Armenia. Other proposals like e.g. the one by Prince Sabah-ed-Din, however, mentioned autonomy of the eastern Vilayets as far as Trabzon.²²⁸

After the collapse of the Palestine front in Jaffa in September 1918 the Turkish government requested the British for an armistice. Naval minister Raouf Bey, the Turks chief negotiator, asked Alexander Katisian, a member of the Armenian embassy in Turkey, if he wanted to accompany him to show the British that the Turks and the Armenians were reconciled. On October 30th the armistice was signed by vice-admiral Gough Calthorpe and Raouf Bey on a British warship near Mudros on Lemnos. No mention was made about securing the rights of the Armenians. Turkey had to break off its relations with the middle powers. Further agreements were made at the Armenians' expense; no mention was made of a return of the deportees and the six Armenian Vilayets, as demanded by Toynbee, who was disappointed, because he thought he had been laid open to suspicion in the eyes of the Armenians. One could get the impression that England had left Turkey a free hand in Armenia, as a price for renouncing the oil fields and Palestine.

The British were mainly interested in securing their conquests in Mesopotamia and Palestine, which were – like the occupation of Kilikia – also accepted by the Turks. Raouf Bey had nothing against the British controlling the artillery on the Dardanelles; however, in the case of a Greek attack, he emphasised, one would have to reckon with a revolution in Turkey. He managed to prevent the delivery of the cities of Sis, Zaytun, Aintab and Hajin though, arguing that the government would fall in such an event. The British set great

228 Nassibian (1985), 121f.

store by concluding the armistice without the Americans and the French; Mudros was therefore a victory against France as well. England had made a major contribution to Turkey's capitulation after all.

After the last congress of the "Ittihat" (CUP) in October 1918 the Young Turkish triumvirate was held responsible for the defeat and dismissed. Enver and Talaat made their escape to Germany on a German warship in November 1918. Together with other Young Turks they were sentenced to death in absentia in Istanbul in July 1919. The last sultan, Mehmed VI, who had succeeded his brother in July 1918, had to execute the orders of the victorious Entente now. The army had to be demobilised; on March 3rd, 1919 the sultan appointed history's first court for passing sentence on "crimes against humanity", at which Turkish judges decided on the basis of Turkish law.

In 1919 the rise of the man began, who later would go down in history as "Atatürk" ("Father of the Turks"). General Mustafa Kemal Pasha, well-tried in the defence of the Dardanelles in 1915, had taken part in the putsch of the Young Turks, was a member of the CUP and had – together with crown prince Vahdeddin visited the emperor William II and his generals Hindenburg and Ludendorff in Bad Kreuznach. He was promoted to the position of army inspector and gathered the nationalist opposition around him in Anatolia; after the occupation of large parts of Anatolia by British, Russian, French and Greek troops, he called for an insurgence against the occupants on May 19th, 1919. The freethinking reformer, who called Islam "the absurd God doctrine of an immoral Beduine" and a "decaying cadaver contaminating our lives", became the focal point of a new nationalist movement. At least on April 24th, 1923, after the introduction of the parliament of the new Turkish republic, he condemned the annihilation of

the Armenians as a "shameful deed", however, a shameful deed of the past ("maziye aid fazahat"). Under his rule, however, the instigators of the genocide made careers. His nationalist movement more and more restrained the influence of the sultan's government. At the congresses of Erzurum and Sivas (23rd July till August 7th, and September 4th to 11th, 1919) Kemal founded a new government with a parliament in Ankara, which elected him president. In this manner two governments were formed, the one controlled by the allied forces in Istanbul and the nationalist one around Kemal Pasha.

As early as in April 1919 the Italians had landed in Antalya and near ancient Ephesus to secure their sphere of influence that had been promised them by the allied forces. In May 1919 the sultan's government staged its first war crimes trials in Istanbul, in which e.g. the massacres at Trabzon were mentioned. Prime minister Damat Ferit condemned the crimes of the Young Turks at the senate meeting of November 18th, 1918: "The crimes committed are outrageous, not only for Ottoman history, but for mankind at large."²²⁹ At the Paris peace conference in May 1919 in the presence of the Ottoman delegates he once again admitted the crimes, apologized for them and especially disapproved of the violence committed by the leaders and members of the Young Turkish committee. In the end, however, he blamed the Young Turks for the crimes. He is the only Turkish politician who has ever publicly distanced himself from the massacres in World War One! Prime Minister Clemenceau replied to Damat Ferit on September 25th, 1919 that Turkey would have to admit its crimes; it didn't have the faculty of governing foreign peoples.²³⁰

229 Fotiadis, in: Hofmann: Verfolgung, Vertreibung...(2004), 191.

230 Ibd., 193:

The sultan's government, which was under British control, appointed Kemal plenipotentiary to put an end to the atrocities against Pontus Greeks and Armenians and to disarm the gangs of Topal Osman Pasha. With this, the fox had been set to keep the geese; even at the first meeting between Topal Osman and "Atatürk", the latter said: "Let the Pontians and the Greeks go. In the course of time, as soon as we get word that they are acting against the law, we will finish them all." At the end of the conversation, Topal Osman said: "Don't worry, my Pasha. I shall offer the Greeks in Pontus the kind of 'incense' that will make them suffocate in their caves like hornets."²³¹ The day of Kemal's departure has been a Turkish National Day up to the present. On September 11th, 1919 Kemal informed the allied forces in Constantinople that the government there did not represent Turkey and was no longer respected by him. The massacres of Christians could be resumed. After the victory of the nationalists in the elections at the end of 1919 Kemal moved his headquarters from Sivas to Ankara. The allied forces realised that only through massive deployment of troops they would have been able to put their ideas into practice and to protect the Christians against renewed persecution and deportation. When Kemal was elected president of the "Great National Assembly" in Ankara in 1920, it was clear that the sultan and his government in Constantinople were nothing but powerless puppets of the allied forces.

13. The Peace Treaty of Sèvres

After Great Britain and France had divided up the Arab its territories on the basis of the secret Sykes-Picot accord, the Ottoman Empire had reached an absolute all-time low. The Entente repeatedly stressed the necessity

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 196.

of Turkey's "punishment" for the genocide of the Greeks and the Armenians. On December 18th, 1916 the allied forces replied to an inquiry by the American president Wilson on possibilities for peace that one of the most important war aims was the liberation of peoples from the bloody suppression by the Turks. Similarly, the French foreign minister said on January 10th, 1917 that the ultimate war aim was the liberation of nations from the barbarian rule of the Turks, who had radically distanced themselves from European civilisation.²³² The High Commissioner of the allied forces in Istanbul, Webb, telegraphed to the Paris peace conference on April 3rd, 1919 that now the Turks had to be punished for the massacres of the Armenians; High Commissioner Calthorpe made a similar remark. The sultan – practically stripped of all his powers – had to act now, and appointed General Mustafa Kemal Pasha army inspector. On March 8th, 1919 the special court martial was established. While the liberal Istanbul government tried hard to come to terms with the past and to cooperate with the allied forces, Kemal Pasha formed the nationalist movement in Anatolia. When he mobilised the resistance against the Greeks, the sultan had him dismissed and declared a rebel. In Anatolia he formed his Turkish nationalist movement, which today is seen as the origin of "new Turkey".

Mustafa Kemal did by no means deny the crimes against the Christian minorities; he just emphasised that one couldn't hold the entire nation responsible for what just a few had done. In Amasya on October 21st, 1919 he in fact pleaded for punishing the Ittihadists. Those who had taken part in the crimes were to be excluded from the elections. This punishment should be imposed to

232 Taner Akcam: *Another History on Sèvres and Lausanne*, in: Kieser-Schaller (2003), 281-299, here: 284.

score good success at the Paris negotiations. Punishment by an international court he refused. Only when Kemal realised that - in spite of the willingness to hold internal war crime trials – the allied forces were still planning to divide up Anatolia, he stopped supporting the trials. At the same time, Kemal put up strong resistance against attempts to add parts of East Anatolia to an independent Armenia.

In spring 1919 western newspapers reported that the CUP was still active and was planning further massacres of Christians. "Greek Children Murdered in Aydin", "Turkish Massacres of Greeks", "Tortures of Greeks in Thracia" were the headlines. "Massacres, torturing and all kinds of repression against Christians are continued in the villages", the "Journal de Débats" reported in February 1919. The "Daily Mail" in 1919 feared there would be further massacres of Christians before the announcement of the clauses of the peace treaty. The congress in Erzurum was to attack the Armenian Republic, with the help of the Muslim population drive the Armenians into the Caucasus and render the foundation of a state impossible, "Le Temps" reported on July 11th, 1919. Numerous articles warned of a rekindling of the massacres of Christians.

The nationalist movement in Ankara knew well enough that its success essentially depended on its treatment of Christians. A part of the propaganda campaign initiated by Kemal Pasha is a conversation with the British general James G. Harbord in September 1919, who was to investigate the political, military and financial aspects of a potential American mandate. Kemal declared he didn't want to take any violent actions against Non-Muslims. He said he wanted to publish a call to the Armenians that they would be able

to live without fear in the future. "We respect the natural rights of the Armenians." He professed to have nothing to do with the Ittihadists. "As for the non-Muslim population (Armenians, Greeks, Jews and so on), with whom we have lived together for a long time, we haven't any different opinions or emotions; we feel attached to them and consider them equal." In an interview with an American newspaper he said: "We have no plans of expansion. ...We guarantee that there won't be any Turkish atrocities against Armenians."²³³ In his conversation with General Harbord he admitted that 800,000 Armenians had been murdered. In December a commission was formed in the interior ministry, which was to find out the number of murdered Armenians. Interior minister Cemal also announced the number to be 800,000 on March 13th, 1919.²³⁴ It must not be overlooked, of course, that such statements primarily served the purpose of putting the Paris peace conference into the right mood. As often, reality was different. When he was accused of having instigated a new massacre of Armenians, he declared: "The Armenian incident is one of the most important things, which the whole world accuses us of. A victory against the Armenian army would mean that our army was committing a new Armenian massacre, and as this would be very unfavourable for us, the movement has to prevent it."²³⁵ What Kemal really thought is shown by the fact that a great part of war criminals later made careers in "his state". When the British reinforced their presence in Istanbul in March 1920, Kemal Pasha summoned the "Great Turkish National Assembly" in Ankara.

233 *Ibid.*, 292.

234 *Ibid.*, 293.

235 *Ibid.*, 294.

Discord among the victorious powers facilitated Greek actions against Turkey. With the consent of the Entente Smyrna – with its Greek majority of inhabitants – was occupied by the Greeks on May 15th, 1919; massacres of Muslims ensued. Churchill considered this an injustice and said that the law had now changed sides. In North Anatolia the Greeks were forging plans to declare a "Pontus Republic" with Trabzon as its centre. There were heavy disputes in the Turkish parliament, because Greek and Armenian delegates wanted to put the genocide on the agenda. While Greek and Armenian deputies claimed 550,000 murdered Greeks and a million of murdered Armenians, Turkish deputies spoke of 500,000 to 600,000 dead.²³⁶ The sultan's government in a way was under control by the allied forces, while Kemal Pasha was building up a nationalist movement in Anatolia, which at the beginning of December 1919 won a two-third majority at the elections, which were boycotted by the Christians. This was the end of the liberal era of Prime Minister Damat Ferit Pasha, who since March 4th, 1919 had been the one and only Turkish prime minister to come to terms with the war crimes of the Young Turks by way of trials, in which Kemal Pasha, too, was sentenced to death. On the nationalist movement's instigation the trials were ended in August 1920. In talks with the representatives of western governments, however, Kemal Pasha admitted that 800,000 Armenians had been killed and condemned the murders.²³⁷ People responsible for the pogrom like e.g. Sükrü Kaya was interior minister of Turkey from 1927 to 1938. He had said to the German consul Rössler: "The final result must be the extermination of the Armenian race. It is the permanent battle between

236 Akcam (1996), 87.

237 Ibid., 124.

Mussulmans and Armenians that is being fought now. The weaker must disappear."²³⁸

The armistice of Mudros was hastily concluded by the British to pre-empt the French; above all it made no mention of the disarming of the Turkish army and the liberation of Armenian territories. Many problems had been left unsolved; they were to be solved in the final peace treaty. Armenian refugees in the Caucasus were not able to return to their home country. The situation of Christian women deported to Tûrkish harems remained as unconsidered as the fate of Armenian children that had been forced to convert to Islam. Lord Bryce called the armistice a "capital mistake" that didn't demobilise the Turkish army, but gained the English the surrender of Mossul and Alexandrette. British national interests had been decisive; the fate of the Christians under Turkish rule didn't matter. The Turks immediately mobilised the Kurds in the six eastern Vilayets to prevent the return of the refugees. Under the eyes of the British the gendarmes in Kilikia were armed with weapons from army supplies. Turkish soldiers looted the republic of Erivan, which were not supported by the victors. Balfour's statement in the House of Commons of November 1918 that England's precaution not to have the Armenians come under Turkish administration again was a pillar of British policy didn't match reality.

At the Paris peace negotiations (1919/1920) the American president Wilson was the most unselfish advocate of the Armenians, who after their declaration of independence had sent representatives to Paris, who appeared there on February 28th, 1919. The Armenians celebrated Wilson as their "God-sent liberator" and called his point 14 "gospel".²³⁹ In view of British ambitions in

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 134f.

²³⁹ Walworth (1986), 505.

Palestine and Iraq, French claims to Syria and the Lebanon and Italian aspirations to the Turkish southern coast and Kilikia, Wilson argued that Armenia needed a Mediterranean harbour and should be put under the protection of a great power (England or France).²⁴⁰ The council of the "Big Four" soon agreed that the Turks should give up Arabia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine. To prevent an Italian protectorate of Transcaucasia Lloyd George in May pleaded for an American mandate. In England there were discussions on the future size of Armenia. Lord Curzon favoured a small, Lord Robert Cecil a larger Armenia including Kilikia. In the six "Vilayets" the Armenians had been the largest ethnic group with 35%. England, however, wanted to leave the mandate to France. In February 1919 the British delegation presented the plan for a larger Armenia stretching as far as Alexandrette and Mersin and would comprise a strip of land around Trabzon on the Black Sea in the north. The USA were to receive the protectorate of Armenia. In autumn 1919 the issue of the American protectorate was being discussed. Wilson was thinking of Hoover as governor. The Americans held the view that Armenia needed at least 150,000 foreign troops to be able to hold the ground between Turkey and Aserbeidshan. When in mid August 1919 the English declared that they wanted to withdraw their troops from Transcaucasia, the issue of the protection of Christians against Muslim violence became topical. French Prime Minister Clemenceau opposed single-handed action by England, but didn't suggest any solution himself. At the end of August he declared that France was prepared to send 10,000 troops to Kilikia – but not to Armenia.

240 *Ibd.*, 488.

The Syrian Christians also took part at the Paris negotiations. The West Syrian patriarch Ignatius Elias III (1917-1932) met the last sultan Mehmed VI in 1919 and received the "Firman" (confirmation). In 1919 he sent Bishop Ephrem Barsauma – who was to become his successor later on – to the Paris negotiations.²⁴¹ The ailing Catholicos Shimun XX sent his sister Surma to London and presented his demands to the High Commissioner A.T. Wilson: He didn't want any mingling of Armenian questions with "Assyrian" ones. The Assyrians – as the political movement of eastern Syrian Christians was to call itself – wanted to live in their own country under a British protectorate, and they demanded the recognition of the Catholicos as the secular and spiritual head.²⁴² The physician Dr. A.K. Yoosuf from Harput and the president of Assyrians in the USA, Yoel E. Werda, took part in the Paris negotiations, where Said Namik and Rustan Nedschib presented the manuscript "La Question Assyro-Chaldéene devant la Conference de la Paix", which indicated the number of "Nestorian" victims of the war massacres to be 250,000 from a total of 881,000 East Syrians living in Turkey in 1914. General Agha Petros was elected president of the national committee of the Assyro-Chaldeans in Paris in 1920. As the Christians could not take part in the peace conference themselves, they submitted experts' opinions and memoranda. Meanwhile there had been attempts at resettling the Hakkari region.

England desired the USA to finance the subsistence of its troops in a possible zone in Armenia until they would come to Armenia themselves; this financing was,

241 Wilhelm Baum: Ignatius Elias III, syrisch-orthodoxer Patriarch von Antiochien (1917-1932), in: Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon, Bd. 24, 2005, 885-888.

242 Yonan (1978), 41f.

however, refused by the American Congress. A commission asked the Armenians in Constantinople, who declared the Turks unable to govern them and demanded a strict mandate. On May 6th, 1919 Wilson rejected the British proposal to send troops to Turkey; on May 14th he at least agreed to ask the Senate to take on an American mandate. The Americans were, however, not willing to take any responsibility there. When Wilson left Paris at the end of June, he expected the conference to decide in August or September whether America would take on the mandate.²⁴³ The American commission headed by General James G. Harbord on its way to Armenia came to Sivas, where they were very impressed by the new Kemalist regime. The commission arrived at the conclusion that the massacres had started from Istanbul and that it was impossible to know whether there would be new massacres in the case of an independent Armenia; by and large, the commission tended to accept the mandate. Admiral Bristol, the American High Commissioner in Constantinople, had no sympathy for Armenian independence. Eventually, there was no American mandate for Armenia; in June 1920 Congress definitively rejected the mandate.

One problem of the young Caucasian republics was the fact that they were not internationally recognized. Avetis Abraham, the chairman of the American commission in Paris, in vain demanded recognition. At the end of 1919 the Russian Bolsheviks succeeded in defeating their adversaries in the Caucasus area, too. As a consequence it was to be expected that the Russians would also reconquer the Caucasian countries. Armenia was the weakest of these states and therefore had least

²⁴³ Anderson (19178), 361.

influence. For the Armenians British indifference was especially frustrating because contrary to the Georgians and Aserbeidshanians they had fought both the Germans and the Turks. When in the Borchalu region there were clashes between Georgians and Armenians – who referred to their autonomy – the English decided in favour of Georgia.

On February 18th, 1919 the English presented a proposal according to which Armenia was to comprise the six Vilayets, former Russian Armenia and Kilikia.²⁴⁴ They preferred an American to a French protectorate of Armenia. Churchill, the state secretary in the ministry of war, was convinced that the Russians would return to the Caucasus after the end of the civil war. From a strategic point of view, Armenia was the least important Transcaucasian state. It did not have any resources vital to England, as e.g. Aserbeidshan with its crude oil. Therefore the British would really have liked to unite the Armenian Nagornij Karabach area with Aserbeidshan, which the Armenian general Andranik had occupied; they ordered the territory to be administrated by Aserbeidshan until the end of the Paris negotiations. But here, too, no decision was made in a conflict continuing to the present day. As in the ceasefire agreement of Mudros the evacuation of the Kars district by the Turks had been stipulated, the British general Forestier-Walker - after months of Turkish refusal – enforced the evacuation in mid-April and surrendered the area to Armenia. The English acted similarly in the case of primarily Muslim Nachitchevan. Nevertheless, the young Armenian republic remained in a weak position, because it lacked international recognition.

Due to the high costs of war, England reduced its army

244 Nassibian (1985), 148-150.

and considered withdrawing from the Caucasus. The traditionally pro-Turkish army partly undercut government policy and didn't support the Armenians against Turkish assaults. At the end of May 1919 30 Turkish representatives were permitted to appear before the "Great Council", a "privilege" Germany was not granted. The breach of the armistice by the Turks was hardly punished. Especially after the defeat of the "Whites" against the Bolsheviks in Russia the idea to strengthen Turkey as a bulwark against communism came into being. When President Wilson asked a British officer how many troops were needed for taking on the Armenian mandate, he answered that up to 5 divisions would be necessary. This alarmed the president, who feared he would not get a majority in Congress.²⁴⁵ The liberal party-leader Asquith – despite his sympathies for the Armenians – was afraid an English mandate could lead to a disaster. In February 1919 Italy declared itself prepared to send two divisions to the Caucasus and one battalion to Konya. Foreign Minister Tommasoni told Balfour that in order to hold the Caucasus one needed at least 40,000 troops, which Italy couldn't afford. The British decision to withdraw troops from the Caucasus greatly alarmed the Armenians. In August 1919 the "British Armenia Committee" turned to the king and the government to prevent Turkish massacres. In the USA in March 1919 40 governors, 250 college and university presidents, 85 bishops and 20,000 priests signed a similar petition to President Wilson. Clemenceau declared that France could protect Armenia and land in Alexandrette. In the end, however, Armenia was left all on its own.

245 *Ibid.*, 168.

In Paris Wilson also had to come to terms with the Greek Venizelos' ideas of a Greek rule over the Turkish majority in Anatolia. In October 1919 he emphasised that it was time to guarantee good government for all peoples of the Ottoman Empire. The Greeks' landing in Smyrna made a solution more difficult. The English Prime Minister Lloyd George wanted to talk Wilson into American commitment in Anatolia. He also made it clear to the Italian Orlando that in spite of the treaty of London Italy would get no territory against the will of the population. Before Kemal Pasha had a firm grip on Turkey and ruled the country – with the exception of Constantinople – Turkish representatives also turned to Wilson with the request to protect them against the Greeks, and they asked for an American mandate in Anatolia. Wilson however, was not to be put off and said the Turks seemed to believe the true history wasn't known in Paris. "I have studied the Turkish question long enough and have come to the conclusion that the only possibility is to throw the Turks out of Constantinople."²⁴⁶ He aimed at the USA's role as a mediator, but not at a mandate given by the League of Nations. On June 27th the "High Council" suspended negotiations about Turkey until the question whether the USA would take on a mandate would be decided. Wilson doubted if his country was ready to accept a mandate for Asia Minor and Armenia. The Turkish nationalists vehemently rejected any mandate. Relations between the USA and the Turks were cooling; they had no share in the peace treaty of Sèvres in August 1920. Idealists like Wilson could neither achieve "good government" for Turkey, nor prevent the war between Greece and Kemalist Turkey.

During the first months of 1920 the peace negotiations

246 Walworth (1986), 495.

with the Turks in Paris were nearing their final stage. On March 16th, 1920 British troops occupied Constantinople to keep down the nationalist movement. At a conference in London in February and March the British foreign minister Lord Curzon protested that the allied forces had promised to establish an independent Armenia. Italian Prime Minister Francesco S. Nitti agreed, and so did French Foreign Minister Philippe Berthelot. The Armenians should be compensated for all they had suffered. Curzon emphasised the difficulties, as all Armenians in "Greater Armenia" had been massacred. In a further round of negotiations in San Remo in April, the treaty's cornerstones were set. In San Remo Lord Curzon protested that Armenia's liberty had been the main object of the allied forces, and their moral duty.²⁴⁷ It was demanded that Armenia would have to be preserved as a free and independent state, but nobody was prepared to make any sacrifice for it. The question how one could bring weapons into Armenia was discussed, too. Trabzon and Batumi would have been convenient ports. As Trabzon was to be left to Armenia, it was believed that this would include Erzurum as well. Berthelot favoured this, even though the Armenians had not had a majority in Erzurum. Lloyd George and Nitti were against Armenia's getting Erzurum, but the foreign ministers Berthelot and Curzon spoke up for it. When the question of financing arose – it was estimated that Armenia needed 10 million pounds – the victorious powers turned to the USA again. Lloyd George said the Armenians would have to fight for their country themselves now. He cynically remarked that who wanted to be a nation would also have to be able to fight for his country. In April 1920 the "Supreme Council" once again

247 Nassibian (1985), 180.

turned to the USA requesting to take on the mandate for Armenia.²⁴⁸ No power was prepared to accept a mandate for Armenia. The USA, however, retired from the European stage after the peace treaty with Germany. Ideas of a Greater Armenia were dropped. In his draft Wilson determined the border, projecting that 42,000 sq.kms of Turkish Armenia should fall to Armenia. It was discussed which parts of the Vilayets Erzurum, Trabzon, Van and Bitlis were to go to the Armenian Republic. The USA were urged to give financial aid to Armenia. In the meantime, new reports of horror had come to Paris. During a Kemalist attack against the French in Kilikia 15,000 to 20,000 Armenians that had returned to their home country from Mesopotamia had been massacred by the Turks.²⁴⁹

On May 10th, 1920 the peace treaty was presented to the sultan's government. Eventually, the Americans rejected the proposals in June 1920. On August 10th, 1920 the peace treaty of Sèvres was signed. In it, the independence of Armenia and the eastern Vilayets was recognized; President Wilson had determined the borders. Kilikia, Syria and the Lebanon came under French administration. In line with the Sykes-Picot accord England received Iraq and Palestine, France Syria and the Lebanon. The Smyrna region technically remained Turkish, but came under Greek administration for five years; at the end of this period a public referendum was to decide about the future. The capitulations that had been suspended by the Young Turks in 1914 became valid again. Article 62 guaranteed protection and security to the Syro-Chaldeans and other minorities.²⁵⁰ The governments of Constantinople and Erivan and

248 *Ibd.*, 177.

249 *Ibd.*, 187.

250 Matuz (1990), 273f.

representatives of the European victorious powers, as well as the representatives of England, France, Italy and Japan signed the treaty in Paris on August 10th, 1920. On August 15th thanksgiving services were celebrated at the Armenian Church in Paris and in Armenia, too. The greatest problem of the treaty was, however, that the borders had not been exactly determined, that Armenia never received sufficient financial and military aid from the allied forces and that the treaty was never ratified by Turkey.

The 300-mile-long border between Armenia's Lake Van and the Black Sea was completely unprotected; Armenia was unarmed, but Turkey armed. In the part of Turkey that had been given to Armenia, five Turkish infantry divisions with a lot of war equipment were stationed. Armenia had just 15,000 poorly armed soldiers at its disposal. The British general staff declared it could only agree to the treaty if enough troops were provided. Like so many contracts with Turkey, this one, too, was but a sheet of paper. The Kemalist counter-government, who had already driven the French out of Marash in February, did not recognize the treaty. On the contrary: The Turks again declared war on Armenia. Marshal Foch of France declared it would take an army of 27 divisions to guarantee adherence to the peace treaty. Mustafa Kemal, however, did not recognize this peace treaty and ordered the attack against the young state of Armenia on September 23rd.

Winston Churchill had warned against this when the Greeks had landed in Smyrna on May 15th, 1919. King Constantine I of Greece had called this action "Venizelos' madness". Only a few days later the generals Mustafa Kemal and Ismet Pasha organised resistance; they rejected the treaty of Sèvres anyway. Mustafa Kemal allied himself

with Lenin, who supported the Turks' fight against their enemies. The Kemalists' "anti-imperialist war" was connected with "unwavering nationalist severity against all other ethnic groups".²⁵¹ The fight of the Kemalists was directed against everybody who didn't want to accept their nationalist concept of unity. After Venizelos' electoral defeat, the referendum on December 5th, 1920 and King Constantine's return the Asia Minor campaign took on an adventurous character. Due to the change of power in Athens, Greece's international stature deteriorated. Paris and London as good as cancelled the treaty of Sèvres, so that Greece was left alone in its war against the Kemalists. France and Italy supported Atatürk, and England and the USA wanted to strengthen him as a counterweight against Bolshevik Russia. As a consequence, France and Italy no longer supported the Greek position in Asia Minor. The replacement of some of pro-Venizelos generals by inexperienced royalist officers had a disastrous effect. After his dismissal, Venizelos pleaded for a withdrawal to the Smyrna region. Greek and Armenian resistance fighters joined forces in action groups near Nicomedia in 1920, and later near Smyrna. After an attack against Ankara the Greek army was defeated by Kemal Pasha and twice by Ismet Pasha near İnönü in 1921. Ismet Pasha later named himself after this place. After the battle on the Sakarya River near Eskişehir in August 1921 the offensive against Ankara failed. In 1922 the Turks took the offensive. Their priority was the establishment of a national state, for the Greeks the campaign developed into the country's greatest catastrophe since it had gained independence.

Smyrna was chiefly a Greek city, called "Gavur-Izmir"

251 Pavlos Tzermias: *Neugriechische Geschichte*, Tübingen 1986, 126.

("Unbelieving Smyrna"). After an eight-month-journey through Greece and Turkey in 1921 Arnold Toynbee wrote that the British should let the Greeks occupy Smyrna.²⁵² At the end of July 1922 Greece announced it would occupy Constantinople; at the same time, the independence of "Ionia" – the area around Smyrna – was proclaimed. This didn't fit into the plans of the western powers, which aspired to the control of the straits themselves. In August and September 1922 the Turks marched into Smyrna and ruthlessly slaughtered all Greeks and Armenians they could lay hand on – Metropolitan Chrysostomos among them. After the terrible fire in the Christian quarter of Smyrna on November 13th, 1922 half a million Greeks²⁵³ fled from Asia Minor to Greece; that sealed the fate of a people that had outlasted 850 years of Turkish rule. The Turkish army hardly bothered about putting out the fire that destroyed Christian Smyrna. After the Greeks' flight the Armenians continued fighting the Turks on their own. Allied war ships before the coast clung to their "neutrality" and frequently didn't let refugees go aboard. In Smyrna alone 30,000 Greeks lost their lives. On October 11th, 1922 Turkey concluded an armistice with the allied forces, but not with the Greeks. The Greeks in the other settlement areas of Asia Minor were also expelled at that time, like e.g. the Kappadocian Greeks in the Göreme area and the other Greeks in Pontus, in the Trabzon area and on the west coast. Only the Greeks living in Istanbul were exempt from deportation; the "ecumenical patriarchate" remained in the Phanar in Istanbul. A large part of the Orthodox and Armenian churches that had been preserved until then were now either destroyed or turned into mosques, like e.g. the Koimesis church in Nicaea (Isnik), built in

252 Nassibian (1985), 198f.

253 Tzermias (1986), 128: „rund anderthalb Millionen“ (about one and a half million).

730 and blown up by the Turks in 1922.²⁵⁴

The Greek writer Ilias Venesis (Elias Mellos, 1904-1973) in "Nr. 31328. Leidensweg in Anatolien" (Nr. 31328 – Ordeal in Anatolia) described how men aged between 18 and 45 years were driven into the interior of Anatolia as "slaves in the working battalions".²⁵⁵ The novels "Friede in attischer Bucht" (Peace in the Attic Bay) and "Äolische Erde" (Aeolian Soil) – an epic piece about a childhood on a patriarchal estate (a book that made him world-famous) – "The Magic of the Aeolian Soil" about a community in which the oriental and occidental worlds touch and the adventures, hunts, smuggling trips, flights and dreams of "Those who swam on the Aegean" deal with this subject. In his novel "Greek Passion" Nikos Kazantzakis describes his people's long ordeal on its way out of a 2000-year-old home country in Asia Minor after the end of the World War. The dream of Constantinople, which had remained the spiritual and cultural point of reference for the Greeks even after 1453, was at an end. East Thracia with Adrianople (Edirne) and the islands of Imbros and Tenedos were lost now. In Asia Minor some two million Greeks had lived side by side with seven million Turks; only in the Smyrna area and in some coastal cities they had had a relative majority.²⁵⁶

14. The Victory of the Kemalists (1920-1922)

Only after the victory of the Bolsheviks against the White Guardsmen England in 1920 was ready to recognize the Transcaucasian republics. In the future they were meant to serve as bulwarks against Bolshevism.²⁵⁷ Yet here, too,

254 Etienne Coche de la Ferte : *Byzantinische Kunst*, Freiburg-Basel-Vienna 1982, 513.

255 Tzermias (1986), 129.

256 Weithmann (1994), 218.

only half-hearted decisions were taken, because the victorious powers England and France were not willing to give military support to Armenia and Georgia. The independence of the Causcasian states was also meant to prevent an alliance between the Bolsheviks and the Kemalists. The British and the French didn't foresee that the "losers" of World War One – Russia, Turkey and Germany – were soon to come to terms with one another again.

Supported by nobody, it was impossible for Armenia to win the war against the Kemalists from the end of September until the beginning of November 1920. 60,000 Turks marched toward Armenia from Kars, the Ararat region and Alexandropolis in November; Kars fell on September 30th, Alexandropolis in November; the toll in Alexandropolis was 60,000 dead, 38,000 wounded and 18,000 prisoners. In two cities 80% of 12,000 dead were children aged five to twelve years.

In the peace of Gümrü (later Leninakan, earlier Alexandropolis) the Armenians had to agree to the cancellation of the statements of the peace of Sèvres on December 3rd, 1920. The Vilayets around Kars and Ardahan, which had fallen to Russia in 1878, were returned to Turkey. Armenia just maintained an area of 27,000 sq.kms; it was permitted to have a mere 1,500 soldiers, 20 machine guns and 8 cannons. A Turkish governor in Erivan was to supervise the execution and control trade.²⁵⁸ Armenia thus became a Turkish protectorate – such a state was not able to survive!

Now the Armenians called Russia for help; on November 27th, 1920 Lenin ordered Armenia to be turned into a Soviet republic. On December 2nd, 1920 the

257 Nassibian (1985), 189.

258 Ibid., 219.

Dashnakian government resigned; the two-year-independence was over. In the peace of Alexandropolis the Soviet Union renounced the districts of Kars and Ardahan won in 1878. The Soviets added the Nagornij-Karabach area, which was 80% Armenian, to Aserbeidshan. Fear of the British and antagonism to the Paris peace had brought Bolsheviks and Kemalists close together. In May 1920 semi-official relations were established.

Ismet Pasha, the commander in chief of the Turkish nationalists had inflicted the above-mentioned severe defeat on the Greeks in West Anatolian İnönü in January and March/April 1921. In the peace of Moscow on March 16th 1921 the Soviet government renounced the districts of Kars and Ardahan to Turkey. Important Armenian cultural monuments like the cathedrals of Ani and the cathedral of Oschki were left to decay. In the Soviet Union, too, the Armenian Church, which had preserved the culture and language of the people over 1,600 years, was brutally suppressed.

At a new peace conference in London in February and March 1921 two Turkish delegations appeared: one sent by the Istanbul government and one by the counter-government in Ankara headed by Foreign Minister Bekir Sami Bey. Peace, however, was not achieved due to Greece's unrelenting opposition. The city of Smyrna wanted a Greek garrison, but might be ready to accept a police force controlled by the allied forces. French Prime Minister Briand and Italian Foreign Minister Count Sforza considered a separate peace treaty. On March 16th, 1921 the Kemalist government managed concluding a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union. Italy, which had occupied Antalya and France, which had occupied the strip of land from Ayıntap to Urfa and Mardin, until

October 1921 evacuated these areas and surrendered them to the Kemalists.²⁵⁹ This caused the flight of 100,000 Armenian and Syrian Christians from Kilikia to the French mandatarly area in Syria. Now only England wanted to carry on the fight against the nationalists. Churchill, on the other hand, said in the House of Commons that England should not get involved in new adventures in Asia Minor.²⁶⁰ In April 1922 Italy evacuated the Meander Valley, France the Asian shore of the Dardanelles; it renounced Kilikia and left the Armenians, who – trusting in French occupation – had returned to their home country, to extermination once again. Thus the Kemalist government was recognized by France on October 20th, 1921.

In February and March 1922 in new negotiations about a revision of the treaty of Sèvres in Paris the allied forces offered the Turks sovereignty over Smyrna and parts of East Thracia. At the second assembly of the League of Nations on September 15th, 1921 Turkey opposed the establishment of "national homelands" for minorities. After the fall of Smyrna on August 26th, 1922 the Greek position soon collapsed; Greece, too, was now ready for peace. The sultan's government in Constantinople was dissolved in September 1922. Only in Constantinople and along the straits allied troops were still stationed. The new Fascist government of Italy wanted to end the Anatolian adventure that implied such heavy losses. After the defeat of the Greeks the Turkophobe Lloyd George also gave up and stepped down in October 1922.

The "National Liberation Army" ceremoniously marched into Istanbul on October 19th, 1922. The sultanate was abolished; aboard a British warship Mehmed VI left

259 Anderson (1978), 370.

260 Michael Neumann – Adrian Christian Neumann: *Die Türkei*, Munich 1990, 299.

Turkey forever. His brother succeeded him just as caliph, until the caliphate was also abolished in 1924. The victories of the Kemalists over the Greeks and Armenians were the precondition that they could now approach the revision of the treaty of Sèvres from quite a different position. On October 2nd, 1922 the last British troops left Constantinople.

The last peace negotiations began on November 10th, 1922 and once more broken off on February 4th, 1923, because the head of the Turkish delegation, İnönü, demanded the complete cancellation of all capitulations valid since 1914. Agha Petros, who had contacts to General Couraud, the High Commissioner of Syria and the Lebanon, on February 1st, 1923 proclaimed the "Independent Assyro-Chaldean Republic", which, however, could not be put into practice.²⁶¹ The English delegate Lord Curzon represented the interests of the Syrian Christians. J. Gorek de Kerboran, the secretary general of the "Assyrian National Committee" handed several memoranda to the president of the peace conference at the end of 1922 and the beginning of 1923. Curzon favoured the return of the Assyrian refugees to the Hakkari area. The representative of Turkey rejected this, as the amnesty was not valid for citizens that had been outside Turkey at the end of the war and had therefore lost the Turkish citizenship. Moreover, the protection of minorities, he said, was just a pretext for the great powers' interfering in Turkey's internal affairs. In April 1923 negotiations were resumed. The Assyrian problem was dealt with in the sessions of May 19th, June 4th and July 17th, 1923. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the British representative Sir Rumbold presented the requests of the Christians. On January 23rd, 1923 Lord

261 Yonan (1978), 44.

Curzon spoke about the Assyrians and demanded guarantees for their religion, language and culture. The Turkish envoy Ismet Pasha "Inönü" refused this. Thus, minority rights were but very vaguely defined in the peace treaty.

The peace of Lausanne, signed on July 24, 1923, was no longer a dictated peace, but a compromise, which left entire Asia Minor with Turkish Armenia, Kilikia and Kurdistan to Turkey. Proposals for a "national homeland" for the Armenians were made during the negotiations, but no longer seriously demanded by any of the great powers. At the Lausanne negotiations Mustafa Kemal didn't even need Russian support any more to win back superiority over the straits. Turkey was returned; Thracia as far as the Maritza, as well as the Greek islands Imbros and Tenedos. A mutual exchange of population was agreed, only exempting the Turks of West Thracia and the Greeks in Constantinople, which was given the name Istanbul once and for all. It is true that the Christians were promised freedom of religion, but the Syrians were not explicitly mentioned in this context. Freedom of religion was expressly granted in articles 38-45; additionally, Christian churches and institutions were to be protected. The rights of "religious minorities", however, were defined in a very general and non-committal manner.²⁶² Article 40 grants them the right to establish and run their

262 (www.lib.byu.edu):

ARTICLE 38. The Turkish Government undertakes to assure full and complete protection of life and liberty to all inhabitants of Turkey without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race or religion. All inhabitants of Turkey shall be entitled to free exercise, whether in public or private, of any creed, religion or belief, the observance of which shall not be incompatible with public order and good morals. Non-Moslem minorities will enjoy full freedom of movement and of emigration, subject to the measures applied, on the whole or on part of the territory, to all Turkish nationals, and which may

own schools, article 41 permits them to use their own languages at those schools. The treaty doesn't mention the minorities that will enjoy these rights. Conferring to the treaty, Greeks, Armenians and Jews, but not the Syrian-

be taken by the Turkish Government for national defence, or for the maintenance of public order.

ARTICLE 39. Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities will enjoy the same civil and political rights as Moslems. All the inhabitants of Turkey, without distinction of religion, shall be equal before the law. Differences of religion, creed or confession shall not prejudice any Turkish national in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil or political rights, as, for instance, admission to public employments, functions and honours, or the exercise of professions and industries. No restrictions shall be imposed on the free use by any Turkish national of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, religion, in the press, or in publications of any kind or at public meetings.

Notwithstanding the existence of the official language, adequate facilities shall be given to Turkish nationals of non-Turkish speech for the oral use of their own language before the Courts.

ARTICLE 40. Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities shall enjoy the same treatment and security in law and in fact as other Turkish nationals. In particular, they shall have an equal right to establish, manage and control at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions, any schools and other establishments for instruction and education, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their own religion freely therein.

ARTICLE 41. As regards public instruction, the Turkish Government will grant in those towns and districts, where a considerable proportion of non-Moslem nationals are resident, adequate facilities for ensuring that in the primary schools the instruction shall be given to the children of such Turkish nationals through the medium of their own language. This provision will not prevent the Turkish Government from making the teaching of the Turkish language obligatory in the said schools. In towns and districts where there is a considerable proportion of Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities, these minorities shall be assured an equitable share in the enjoyment and application of the sums which may be provided out of public funds under the State, municipal or other budgets for educational, religious, or charitable purposes. The sums in question shall be paid to the qualified representatives of the establishments and institutions concerned.

Orthodox Christians can make use of these rights. In 1923, the then Syrian-Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius Elias III Shakir Alkan decided it was better for the Syrians as common citizens not to attract attention in newly founded Turkey and not to expose themselves as a minority. Thus, the Syrian Christians lost their claim to schools of their own and had to depend on Turkish ones.

ARTICLE 42. The Turkish Government undertakes to take, as regards non-Moslem minorities, in so far as concerns their family law or personal status, measures permitting the settlement of these questions in accordance with the customs of those minorities. These measures will be elaborated by special Commissions composed of representatives of the Turkish Government and of representatives of each of the minorities concerned in equal number. In case of divergence, the Turkish Government and the Council of the League of Nations will appoint in agreement an umpire chosen from amongst European lawyers. The Turkish Government undertakes to grant full protection to the churches, synagogues, cemeteries, and other religious establishments of the above-mentioned minorities. All facilities and authorisation will be granted to the pious foundations, and to the religious and charitable institutions of the said minorities at present existing in Turkey, and the Turkish Government will not refuse, for the formation of new religious and charitable institutions, any of the necessary facilities which are guaranteed to other private institutions of that nature.

ARTICLE 43. Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities shall not be compelled to perform any act which constitutes a violation of their faith or religious observances, and shall not be placed under any disability by reason of their refusal to attend Courts of Law or to perform any legal business on their weekly day of rest. This provision, however, shall not exempt such Turkish nationals from such obligations as shall be imposed upon all other Turkish nationals for the preservation of public order.

ARTICLE 44. Turkey agrees that, in so far as the preceding Articles of this Section affect non-Moslem nationals of Turkey, these provisions constitute obligations of international concern and shall be placed under the guarantee of the League of Nations. They shall not be modified without the assent of the majority of the Council of the League of Nations. The British Empire, France,

These agreements were also to be under the protection of the League of Nations. Reality, however, has been different to the present day. Armenians and Kurds had to bury their dream of independence. What followed was the resettlement of Greeks from the Aegean, the Pontus, Trabzon and Kappadocia. In Kayseri, the priest Eftim (Euthymios) attempted to save his parish through voluntary Turkification and had himself put forward as the rival government patriarch; only a few Christians followed his example though.²⁶³

15. The Situation of the Christians in Turkey until the War in Cyprus (1923-1974)

After the end of World War, One the Greek Orthodox patriarchate at first was left without a patriarch; as late as

Italy and Japan hereby agree not to withhold their assent to any modification in these Articles which is in due form assented to by a majority of the Council of the League of Nations. Turkey agrees that any Member of the Council of the League of Nations shall have the right to bring to the attention of the Council any infraction or danger of infraction of any of these obligations, and that the Council may thereupon take such action and give such directions as it may deem proper and effective in the circumstances. Turkey further agrees that any difference of opinion as to questions of law or of fact arising out of these Articles between the Turkish Government and any one of the other Signatory Powers or any other Power, a member of the Council of the League of Nations, shall be held to be a dispute of an international character under Article 14 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The Turkish Government hereby consents that any such dispute shall, if the other party thereto demands, be referred to the Permanent Court of International Justice. The decision of the Permanent Court shall be final and shall have the same force and effect as an award under Article 13 of the Covenant.

ARTICLE 45. The rights conferred by the provisions of the present Section on the non-Moslem minorities of Turkey will be similarly conferred by Greece on the Moslem minority in her territory.

263 Strothmann (1936), 49.

1921, Meletios IV Metaxakis was able to take up office with British support. In 1920, after the foundation of the League of Nations, the ecumenical patriarchate addressed an encyclical to all churches, in which it suggested the foundation of an association of churches and the introduction of a common calendar.²⁶⁴ In the Peace of Lausanne the patriarchate was recognized; at the same time it was determined that the patriarch should be a Turkish citizen and get the office through election. The patriarch, however, was no longer able to turn to the government to efficiently protect the Christians against xenophobia, as the government had moved to Ankara in 1923. The seminar on the island of Chalki was promoted to an academy in 1919. Since the end of the World War, the Orthodox Church had been losing more and more believers. In 1927, there were still 257,000 Christians in Turkey, about 10% of them Syrian.²⁶⁵ Eftim I, the "head" of the Turkophone Orthodoxy, which called for breaking with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, used the difficult situation of the Greeks in Turkey for putting the patriarchate under pressure. Since 1921, he had been organising the "Turkish Orthodoxy" as the "Papa"; in 1962, his son Eftim II and later Eftim II's brother Erenerol (+2002) succeeded him. The "Church" today still possesses three church buildings in Istanbul, but has only about 100 members. It met with no recognition wherever, neither through the "Ecumenical Council of Churches" nor the Vatican. For Turkey, however, it became a compliant instrument of religious policy, as e.g. in 1974, when it consented to Turkey's invasion of Cyprus. The

264 Gregorios Larentzakis: Das Ökumenische Patriarchat von Konstantinopel im Dienste der kirchlichen Einheit und der Vereinigung Europas, in: KNA ÖKI 27, 27.6.1985, 5-11, here 5 a. 10.

265 Yonan (1978), 110; Strothmann (1936), 48, writes from 110.000 Greeks and 70.000 Armenians.

small Armenian Catholicate of Aghtamar on Lake Van with its two dioceses and 100,000 believers had fallen as early as 1914. In Eastern Turkey, the followers of the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Chaldeans, which are unified with Rome, have held the ground to the present day.

Other Christian churches did not fare better. When the civil war broke out, the "Jacobite" patriarch Ignatius Elias III spent some months in Jerusalem in 1922, then visited Mustafa Kemal Pasha and took part in the opening session of the Great National Council. In two big waves of escape in 1922 and 1924 most Syrian Christians left Turkey and moved to the French mandate in Syria, where Kamishli and Aleppo became their centres. In May 1923, the patriarch returned to Mardin and took up quarters at the Ananias monastery (Deir al-Zafaran) for the last time, only to move his see to Homs in Syria in 1924. In the same year the last Christians left Edessa and moved to Spain. The Armenian cathedral of Edessa - one of the oldest churches altogether - was first turned into a storage shed for fire extinguishers and then into a mosque. After his death in Kerala, Bishop Ephrem I Barsauma, who had already represented the Jacobites during the Paris negotiations, was elected patriarch. Mar Yohannan Dolabani, the Bishop of Mardin appointed Metropolitan in 1946, founded the magazine "Magalta d-hekmata" and wrote numerous works. After the peace of Lausanne, the West Syrian Church in Turkey just kept the two dioceses of Mardin and Turabdin and the monasteries Mor Gabriel (Quartamin), Mor Malke, Mor Abraham near Midyat and Mor Jacob of Salah. In Diyarbakir there is the Church of Mary, a former Episcopal see that occasionally served as the patriarch's summer residence. After 1923, the Turabdin area was affected by Kurdish insurrections that broke out because the Kurds had not been granted the autonomy they desired. Many

Christians from the Turabdin have meanwhile moved to Istanbul, where the Greeks and the Armenians, too, have formed larger colonies. Nowadays, they are called "Süryani" in Turkey. Some 20,000 still live in present-day Turkey, half of them in Istanbul. The monastery of Deir al-Zafaran, like the 4th-century Mor Gabriel monastery (Quartamin), which - after the Kurdish occupation - had been revived in 1970, has remained a centre of the Syrian Christians in Turkey to the present day, even after the closing down of its monastic school by the Turkish government (1980). In 1915, all inmates of the monastery had been murdered by the Kurds on the government's order. The Kurds kept the monastery occupied until 1960. Under the abbot Sabo Günes, renovation could be started in 1956. Today - apart from the bishop - two monks, 15 nuns and about 40 disciples live there: During the day, however, they have to attend the state school in Midyat.

From May 19 until June 5, 1924, the final border between Turkey and Iraq was discussed at the conference of Constantinople. As there was no fixed border yet, many "mountain Nestorians" had returned to their home area in Hakkari; until 1923, about 8,000 of them resided there again. The British, therefore, endeavoured to alter the border of Iraq at Turkey's expense. The British diplomat Percy Cox tried to advocate Britain's expansion efforts with the help of East Syrian Christians. In contrast to Ismet Pasha's statement in Lausanne, the Turkish envoy Fethi Bey declared that the Nestorians could return to their home country without further ado. Eventually, the negotiations were broken off and resumed at the 30th meeting of the League of Nations from August 29 until October 3, 1924. When the British declared that the Hakkari area was no-man's-land, the Turks created a *fait accompli* by ransacking and burning the villages

meanwhile reconstructed by the "Nestorians" (East Syrians).²⁶⁶ The "Nestorians" left their home country for good and settled in America and North Syria, where many West Syrian refugees had established new homes beyond the Turkish border. At the 35th meeting of the League of Nations in September 1925, the commission finally declared the Hakkari area to be Turkish, recommending to the "Nestorians" to accept Fethi Bey's offer and return to their home country. A board of Inquiry headed by General Laidoner was appointed. On December 10, 1925, it presented a report to the commission, saying that 3,000 Chaldean Assyrians had fled from the Turks to Iraq and describing the violent methods of deportation used by the Turks. Thus, the East Syrian Church in Turkey was practically annihilated. It gained strength in exile, though; Bishop Mor Severius Ephrem - the later patriarch - consecrated the first two Syrian churches of the USA in West New York (New Jersey) and in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1927.

Since the standardization of the school system in 1924, non-Turkish private schools had been subject to state control, although in articles 40 and 41 of the Treaty of Lausanne minorities had been granted the right to maintain their own schools. The Turks denote the Greeks and Armenians, but not the Syrians as "non-Muslim minorities". In 1934, a law forbidding the wearing of church garments outside churches was passed against the Christians. On February 8, 1935, out of 399 parliamentary delegates, two Orthodox Christians, one Jew and one Armenian were nominated.²⁶⁷ In 1948, Islamic religious education was introduced at schools; there is no Christian religious instruction. On March 1, 1978, the Turkish

266 Yonan (1978), 47.

267 Strothmann (1936), 48.

minister of education Necdet Uğur in a secret letter to the governor of Mardin forbid teaching in the seminary of Deir al-Zafaran, and on February 2, 1979 in the Mor Gabriel monastery, too.²⁶⁸ In 1982, it was even ruled that Christian students had to attend lessons of Muslim religious education.²⁶⁹ Until the beginning of the 1940s, Christians had to do labour instead of military service; nowadays, Christians must do their military service in remote areas and are discriminated against within the army. According to military regulations, no Christian can become an officer, because he is not circumcised. Under torture, Christians in the army were forced to get themselves circumcised. Christians are excluded from higher civil service like in the police force or judiciary. In 1956, a revision of the real estate register declared land owned by the church as unclaimed property. If there is no priest left in a parish, the property will devolve upon the tax authorities (Vakif). Due to the principle of laicism new foundations of associations with religious objectives are prohibited.

Despite all modernization carried out by its founder, Kemalist Turkey - with its teaching of the superiority of the Turkish race in Asia - was a fascist and authoritarian system. It was not the only fascist movement. Adolf Hitler, who was acquainted with the former consul Scheubner, knew about the history of the massacres of 1915, making particular mention of this fact in a 1931 interview. When still German ambassador to Turkey in 1933, Hitler's vice chancellor Franz von Papen had declared that because of the separation from all that was not Turkish, the Kemalist system was a model for Germany.²⁷⁰ In a speech to Wehrmacht officers on August

268 Rabo (2005), 9.

269 Gabriel Rabo: Die Aramäer unter der türkisch-islamischen Herrschaft, in: www.user.gwdg.de

270 Kieser-Schaller (2003), 60.

22nd before the outbreak of World War Two, Hitler himself seems to have said: "Who still speaks about the Armenian genocide nowadays?"²⁷¹ Hitler continued what Talaat and the Young Turks had shown in 1915/16: a totalitarian claim to power for ideological racist reasons, which included genocide. Quite rightly this is today condemned as genocide worldwide!

Turkey achieved its last territorial extension in 1939, when France handed the Sandchak from Iskenderun with Antakya (Antiochia) over to Turkey in order to win Turkey as an ally against Nazi Germany. As a consequence, 14,000 Armenians, once again, came under Turkish rule. Most of them left their home country and founded new villages like Anjar in the Lebanese Beeka plain - where 2,400 Armenians live - and Kessab in Syria. Only the Armenians of Vakifi on the southern slope of the Musa Dagh in the south of the province of Hatay and a group in Antakya (Antiochia) remained in their home regions. There are still 38 Armenian households, making a living by growing citrus fruits. Annual pilgrimages to St. Mary's Church on the Musa Dagh can hardly prevent the assimilation of the Armenians, for, according to article 42 of the constitution introduced by the military in 1982, only the Turkish language may be taught in Turkey!

The People's party, founded by Atatürk in 1923, was the only legitimate party until 1946. Only Atatürk's successor İnönü granted universal suffrage and party pluralism in 1946. On the basis of the historian Esat Uras, who published his voluminous work on the Armenian issue in 1951 (English edition: "The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question", Istanbul 1988),

271 Gust Wolfgang: Die Verdrängung des Völkermords an den Armeniern. Ein Signal für die Shoah, in: Kieser-Schaller (2003), 463-480, here 476-477.

Turkish historiography has been denying the facts up to the present. Only gradually, Turkish historians are realising that with historical fabrications - e.g. that the Turks had been the aboriginal inhabitants of Asia Minor or the deportations had merely been a consequence of Armenian massacres of Turks - they have excluded themselves from the international network of historical science. For Turkish historiography, too, the way toward Europe and an international discourse will be a long one; a lot of preliminary work will have to be done by the Turks before they might find a place within the European society with its scale of values.

In 1960, 1971 and 1980, the army staged coups and appointed authoritarian governments. The Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate remained in the Phanar (Fener), the district of tax officials and diplomats proficient in languages (Fanariots). The Greek University, built in 1881, still dominates the scenery. After the patriarch had been forced to abandon the Pammakaristos monastery (today's Fethiye Camii) in 1586, Phanar became the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate fifteen years later. In the Hagios Georgios Church, built in 1720, there is still the Marieni crown of Theotokos Hodegetria from the 11th century. In 1941, the Phanar was destroyed by lightning; in 1989, the successor building was consecrated. Quite near, there is the Panagia Mouchliotissa, the convent of the Mother of God, called "Mongolian Church" after Maria Palaiologina, which is the one and only Byzantine church in Istanbul that has never been turned into a mosque. The Turks call the Greeks living in Turkey "Rum", their language "Rumsha". Today, 58 churches with 19 schools, several children's homes and one hospital belong to the Phanar. The Greek newspapers

"Apoyevmahiti" and "Iho" have been published in Istanbul since 1925. In 1922, 280,000 Greeks were still living in Istanbul, 111,200 were permitted to remain there.²⁷² The rest had to move to Greece.

In 1960, diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Turkey were established. Until 1971, the Orthodox Church in Turkey had run a theological college on the island of Chalki, which was shut down by the state. Until now, all attempts to re-establish it have failed. As a consequence, the problem of training priests has become really difficult, as they have to be instructed in Turkey. In addition to the four eparchies in Turkey, Crete, Rhodes, the Dodecanese islands and Athos are subordinate to the patriarchate. Since 1966, the Orthodox Patriarchate has been running a centre of studies in Chambésy near Geneva. In 1948, the patriarchate under Athenagoras I (1948-1972) was among the founding members of the Ecumenical Council of Churches.

Quite rightly, Athenagoras I has been called the "greatest personality of 20th century Orthodoxy".²⁷³ Born in Epirus in 1886, this Greek had, in 1930, become full professor of the Orthodoxy in the USA, where he supported his friend Harry S. Truman in the 1948 electoral campaign. When president, Truman forced his candidacy and election as patriarch; Athenagoras flew to his inauguration in the president's private plane. In his New Year's address in 1959, he established contacts to Pope John XXIII and got the ecumenical discourse going. In

272 Faruk Sen (ed.): *Das ethnische und religiöse Mosaik der Türkei und seine Reflexionen auf Deutschland*, Münster 1998, 61.

273 Étienne Fouilloux: *Die Atempause (1939-1958)*, in: *Geschichte des Christentums*, vol.12: *Erster und zweiter Weltkrieg. Demokratien und totalitäre Systeme (1914-1958)*, Freiburg-Basel Wien 1992, 1023.

1961, there was the first pan-orthodox conference. In 1962, M. Ramsey, the head of the Anglican Church, visited Athenagoras in Istanbul. After centuries of hostility between the Syrian and the Orthodox patriarchs, Patriarch Jakub III Severus visited the Phanar in 1963; as a consequence, a new discourse between Orthodoxy and "Jacobites" began.²⁷⁴ At the pan-Orthodox conference in Rhodes, the churches decided to start a dialogue with Rome on a level of equality. On January 6, 1964, Athenagoras met with Pope Paul VI in Jerusalem and paved the way toward a reconciliation with the Catholic Church. On December 7, 1965, the heads of the churches declared excommunication to be obsolete.²⁷⁵ On July 27, 1967, Paul VI visited the ecumenical patriarch in Istanbul, who returned the visit on October 28, 1967. In November 1979, Pope John Paul II visited Patriarch Dimitrios I in Istanbul. In 1980, the official dialogue between Rome and Constantinople began in Patmos and Rhodes.²⁷⁶ In December 1987, Patriarch Dimitrios I visited Pope John Paul II in Rome. His successor Bartholomaios I spoke to the European Parliament in Strasbourg on April 19, 1994 and said: "We are serving a tradition of seventeen centuries, in which we have worried about the preservation and unity of European culture, and have fought for it. The time-honoured Patriarchate of the New Rome (Constantinople) has - like the other European pole, Ancient Rome, - not been lucky enough to make this unity visible. We are sorry about this. ...In spite of all great changes in European history the Ancient and the

274 Spuler (1968), 285.

275 Dietmar W. Winkler - Klaus Augustin: *Die Ostkirchen*, Graz 1997, 29.

276 Grigorios Larentzakis: 10 Jahre offizieller Dialog zwischen orthodoxer und katholischer Kirche - Eine Bilanz, in: *Pro Oriente*, Innsbruck-Wien 1994, 46-77.

New Rome are still the points of reference for the cultural unity of Europe."²⁷⁷ The position of the Ecumenical Patriarchate has gained importance worldwide after the Second World War.

The number of Greeks in Turkey has been constantly declining since 1922. In the 1930s, Atatürk endeavoured to bring about a reconciliation of Turkey with the Greeks. Later tensions increased in the wake of the Cyprus conflict. After a bomb attack that damaged Atatürk's birth house in Thessalonica (allegedly carried out by Greeks, but in reality staged by the Turkish Secret Service) there was the "crystal night of Istanbul" with pogrom-like assaults on Greeks, who left Turkey in droves. 73 out of a total of 80 churches, 26 Greek and eight Armenian schools, five sport clubs, 4,348 shops, 27 chemist's stores and 110 restaurants, cafeterias and hotels in Greek possession were devastated. There were 16 dead and 32 injured and a material damage of 270-360 million dollars.²⁷⁸ Many churches and houses were abandoned, more than 100,000 Greeks moved to Greece; the problem of ownership has not been solved to the present day. The number of Greeks in Istanbul has shrunk to 50-60,000. The expulsion of the patriarchate could just about be prevented, because Athenagoras had stayed loyal to Turkey, which disappointed the Greeks. In 1963, there was a new escalation because of the Cyprus crisis. 12,000 Greeks were expelled from Turkey for alleged treason. On its 50th anniversary, the Turkish newspaper "Radikal" reported that it was time to "historically deal with" these encroachments. Today,

277 *Orthodoxes Forum* 8, 1994, 239f, here cited after: Gregorios Larentzakis: *Das einheitliche Imperium Romanum und die polyzentrische Struktur der Kirche innerhalb des Imperiums*, in: *Grazer Theol. Studien* 21, 1996, 50-77, here 72-73.

278 Genocide against the Bulgarian, Greek, Armenian, Cypriot and Kurdish people, Sofia w.y., 19.

about 3,500 Greeks still live in Turkey; 2,500 of them in Istanbul and about 500 on the Prince Islands in the Marmara Sea. The Greek Patriarchate has been the subject of political controversy again and again.

The Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople has lasted to the present day. 35 churches are subordinate to it. The official number of Armenians today is 70,000. Most of them live in Istanbul. Additionally, there is the Armenian village of Vakifli on the Musa Dagħ near Iskenderun. The Armenian Apostolic Church, which in 1903 owned about 1,000 schools, today runs a mere 21 schools and one hospital. Some 3,500 Armenians are members of the "Armenian Catholic Church", which owns three churches in Istanbul and runs its own schools and social institutions. In the former Armenian settlement areas around Lake Van there are said to be 150,000 Armenians, who do not freely confess to their nationality.²⁷⁹ There are three weeklies: "Jamanak", Turkey's oldest newspaper founded in 1908, and "Marmara" appear in Armenian, and "Agos" in Turkish. Among other things, they publish news about Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora.

Approximately 7,000 Christian Arabs in Turkey live in the province of Hatay and the neighbouring cities of Iskenderun and Adana. When the province of Hatay became Turkish territory in 1938, many local Christians emigrated to the Lebanon and Syria, but also to the USA, to Canada, Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela. They call themselves "Melkites" and are subordinate to the Patriarch of Antiochia (Antakya), who has his see in

279 Jasmine Dum-Tragut: *Verstreutes Volk und ferne Heimat*, in: "...Aber unvergänglich sind wir wie unsere Berge". *Armenien*, ed. by Erich Renhart u. Jasmine Dum-Dragut, Graz-Wien 1997, 53-61, here 5.

Damascus now. They belong to the Orthodoxy, but celebrate mass in the Arab language. A small group of Melkites unified with Rome also belongs to them. The Melkites are not officially recognized as a minority in Turkey, nor are there any books or magazines in Arabic. Arabic is not taught at normal schools.

16. From the Cyprus Conflict to the Situation of Christians in Turkey Today

After Cyprus had become independent in 1960, there was a coup staged by the Greek-Cypriot National Guard in 1974, and, as a consequence, the invasion of the northern part of the island; 37% of the island was occupied by the Turks, who proclaimed the "Republic of Northern Cyprus" there, which was not recognized internationally. Since that time there have also been terrorist attacks by the Armenian underground movement ASALA. The still unresolved Cyprus conflict increases tensions between Christians and Muslims in Turkey.

In the Turabdin (province of Mardin), it was, above all, the conflict between the Kurds and the Turkish state, and the fighting between the army and the Kurdish PKK that lead to the emigration of many Syrian Christians to Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands in the 1970s. Some 100,000 believers belong to the Syrian diocese in the USA and Canada.²⁸⁰ On February 26, 1976, the Swedish government granted permanent residence permit to 8,000 Assyrians from Turkey; most of them live in Södertälje near Stockholm, where a bishop looks after the about 25,000 Syrians in Scandinavia. Some 150 families with 700 members came to Austria, where Patriarch Ignatius Jacob

280 Aydin (1990), 138.

281 Yonan (1978), 209.

III visited them in 1977.²⁸¹ On his visit to Germany, the patriarch appointed the monk Julius Yesu Cicek his representative in Europe. Later Cicek became bishop; he founded the Barhebraeus editing house in Lane Glosser in the Netherlands, where, in 1981, a Syrian Mor Ephrem-Monastery was erected. The western Diaspora owes Bishop Cicek 51 of its 67 churches and monasteries acquired. In 1981, the Syrian-Orthodox Church - as the "Jacobites" call themselves - was recognized as a religious community in the Netherlands. Switzerland and Greece, too, accommodated Syrian Christians. There, the old tensions also produced their after-effects; in Belgium, the Greek-Orthodox Church tried to prevent the registration of the Syrian-Orthodox Church as "orthodox". Today, there are still three episcopal sees in Turkey: in Istanbul - where 15,000 "Suriani" live -, in Mardin/Deir al-Zafaran and in Midyat/Turabdin. The number of Chaldeans, Syrians, Armenians and Latins unified with Rome is about 20,000.

Since the 1960s - thanks to the ecumenical movement - there has been more historical research and an improvement of aid in the wake of development aid projects. Helga Anschütz, who has been active in the Turabdin since 1965, published a well-founded monograph on this in 1984.²⁸² The Mor Gabriel Society in Reinbeck, which is headed by her, has been supporting the Turabdin Christians for years. Through journalistic activity and documentaries, it has made a considerable contribution to preserving the local culture there. Additionally, the German-Armenian Society was re-founded in Mainz in 1972. The liturgist Hans Hollerweger from Linz founded the "Initiative Christian Orient" and

282 Helga Anschütz: Die syrischen Christen vom Tur Abdin. Eine altchristliche Bevölkerungsgruppe zwischen Beharrung, Stagnation und Auflösung, (1984) ND Würzburg 1985.

for years has been collecting donations used for improving the Turabdin's infra structure and resettling refugees. His book about the Turabdin (published in three languages) has become the bridge between emigrants and Christians that have stayed at home.²⁸³

The Christians in Turkey have been kept under surveillance by the state to the present day; the telephones of priests are bugged etc. A dozen of villages in the highlands of Bohtan formerly belonged to the Chaldean Church, which is unified with Rome. They have preserved their central Syrian dialect, but are devoid of any churches or priests. They are spiritually looked after by priests from the Turabdin, who undertake the strenuous journey there once or twice a year. The protection of cultural assets is also a great problem. In 1832, the theologian Horatio Southgate discovered the "largest Syrian library with books in 12 languages" at the Deir al-Zafaran monastery; after 1840 Budger still found more than 100 manuscripts from the time around 1000 there, in 1880, the Syrologist Eduard Sachau merely 15 to 20 books handwritten on parchment from the time before 900.²⁸⁴ In October 2004, the Prince of Wales visited the monastery at Deir al-Zafaran. At present, the new abbot-bishop Filoksenos Saliba Ozmen endeavours to arouse the interest and understanding of local Muslims for the monastery, and indeed, many Muslims visit the sight. State President Demirel received the two Istanbul bishops Timotheus and Filoksenos for a heart-to-heart talk. The Syrian Christians in Istanbul are looked after by bishop Filoksenos Yusuf Cetin, the Armenians by Patriarch Mesrop, who recently opened Turkey's first Armenian museum together with

283 Hans Hollerweger: *Lebendiges Kulturerbe. Living Cultural Heritage. Canli Kültür Mirası*, Linz 1999.

284 Anschütz (1985), 157.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The monastery Mor Gabriel (Quartamin) has been headed by Abbot-Archbishop Timotheus Aktas since 1974; in 1997, the Protestant Academy in Hofgeismar, Germany, organised a conference on the occasion of 1600th anniversary of the foundation in 397. The Mor Malke Monastery, south of Harabale, was repeatedly destroyed, last by the Kurds in 1981. The monastery Mor Jakub of Salah had been largely destroyed until 1966; it houses inscriptions from the 7th to the 13th centuries. At the Monastery Mor Abraham, on the outskirts of Midyat, there are just a few monks. Hardly any art treasures and manuscripts are preserved in these monasteries. Church institutions are afraid that the state might take away the manuscripts from them; therefore they dislike showing them to strangers. Among the most important manuscripts still in the possession of Syrian Christians today, there is the evangelarum of Dioskoros Theodoros of Mardin (1222-1282) and the evangelarum of Hah, both richly decorated with miniatures. A mere 14 Jacobite manuscripts, mostly from the Mardin area, are in Germany.²⁸⁵ Considering the permanent danger of the loss of inscriptions, churches etc. Andrew Palmer's study on the early history of the Turabdin has been of major importance.²⁸⁶ To the present day, Turkey is lacking a safe place for the remains of the ancient libraries in Christian hands, out of reach for the state.

An important problem of Christians in Turkey is the obstruction of a free school system. In 1978, the Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul, Schnork Kalustian, wrote an annual report with 22 points of complaint about the situation of

285 Julius Assfalg: *Syrische Handschriften*, (= *Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland* 5), Wiesbaden 1963, XIII.

286 Andrew Palmer: *Monk and mason on the Tigris Frontier. The early history of Tur Abdin*, Cambridge-London 1990.

the Armenian Church. The report, which in particular relates to the school system, was handed to Prime Minister Ecevit on March 29th. Ecevit promised to examine the complaints, but nothing changed. On the occasion of Atatürk's 100th birthday in 1981, Greek Orthodox Christians and Armenians had to contribute a high donation and a commemorative plaque. The patriarch used the occasion of handing over the money for mentioning the repressive educational policy. Ankara often takes its time - up to a year - to confirm teachers and principals in their offices.²⁸⁷ The Greek-Orthodox and West Syrian Churches had to learn similar lessons. The Christians, therefore, expect that in EU negotiations Turkey will be put under pressure to stick to the minority rights laid down in the Treaty of Lausanne.

Turkey's Christians, unified with Rome, fare slightly better, because the pope is considerably more respected than the patriarchs of the East. In Istanbul and Izmir, the Catholic Church has two episcopal sees with about 12,000 believers, 8,000 of them living in Istanbul.²⁸⁸ In 1975, some 50 priests and 150 nuns look after eleven grammar schools (five for boys with 3,000 pupils and six for girls with 2,000 pupils). The schools and hospitals are in Istanbul and Izmir. The Armenian Catholic Church has one archbishop with four parishes and about 8,000 believers in Istanbul. The Syrians unified with Rome are looked after by a patriarchal vicar in Istanbul; approximately 4,000 believers lived in the south-east of the country in 1975; many of them wanted to emigrate. This caused the parish priest Yussuf of Diyabakir to make the comment: "We

287 Tessa Hofmann: *Armenien. Völkermord. Vertreibung. Exil* (1987), 74-83 a. 111.

288 Jacob Havier: *Das Christentum in der heutigen Türkei*, in: *Stimmen der Zeit*, April 1975, 237-247.

have got no future here anymore." In Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Tarsus, there are also Protestant Churches with schools, those of Armenian origin and language among them. These churches, too, are primarily financed through donations from Europe and the USA; Protestant missionary work since the 19th century shows its after-effects here.

The stubborn denial of the massacres in the 19th and 20th centuries by the Turkish authorities has lead to widespread solidarity in many countries. In the first place, the USA, Great Britain and Switzerland have to be mentioned, but also Germany with institutions like the Johannes Lepsius Archive in Halle or the Institute for Diaspora and Genocide Research at the Ruhr University of Bochum, where Director Mihran Dabag - himself the child of survivors - between 1988 and 1996 made interviews with 140 survivors of the 1915 massacres, and documented them. In 1987, the European Parliament, too, acknowledged the 1915/17 massacres as genocide. This did not prevent the Turkish historian Türkkayer Ataöv, head of the International Relations department at the University of Ankara, from writing publications in which the steps taken against the Armenians are presented as preventive measures for the protection of the Ottoman state.

In recent years - notwithstanding the restriction placed on the matter by official politics - there have been symptoms of an opening in Turkey. Taner Akcam's book "Armenia and the Genocide" (1996) is a first proof of the fact that no longer all Turkish historians back the official doctrine of denying the massacres. In 1997 the German Armenia expert Dr. Hilmar Kaiser was banned from Turkish archives for lifetime. On December 21, 2000, the second judicial hearing against the Syrian Orthodox parish priest Yussuf Akbulut began before the Second Chamber of the Court of National Security. He was

accused of "incitement of the masses". His private statements about the genocide of Armenians and Assyrians in Turkey in 1915 - made in the presence of two journalists from the newspaper *Hürriyet* in October 2000 - were published below the headline "A traitor among us". Without his knowledge, the journalists had videotaped and broadcasted the conversation on Turkish TV. In line with § 312 of the Turkish penal code, Akbulut was indicted for "having openly stirred up the masses to hatred by making distinctions according to region, class, race and religion." The maximum penalty for this is five years in prison. The mentioned § 312 of the Turkish penal code is a well-tried means of preventing any analysis of Turkish contemporary history, especially dealing with the genocide of the Armenians. After international protests, the charge against parish priest Akbulut for incitement to racial hatred was dropped at the third hearing of April 5, 2001. To the judge, the decisive fact was that the accused had not made his statements in public, but in a private conversation. In a sermon, the parish priest of Diyarbakir had said that the world was always speaking of the murders of Armenians, but never of murders of Syrians. Only international support - above all from Sweden - led to his release.

Patriarch Dimitrios I and Bartholomaios told the author about hitherto futile efforts to reopen the seminary in Chalki. The telephones of monasteries like Deir al-Zafaran and Mor Gabriel are still bugged. On April 14, 2003, the Turkish minister of education ordered school principals to oblige all Turkish pupils of elementary and secondary schools to deny the extermination of the Armenians. In 2005, the writer Orhan Pamuk was indicted for "publicly denigrating Turkdom", because he had pointed to the Armenian massacres. In an interview with

the Swiss "Tagesanzeiger", he had said: "30,000 Kurds and one million Armenians have been killed here, and hardly anybody dares mentioning it. So I am doing it. And that's why they hate me."²⁸⁹ The resettling of 70 refugees willing to return to Kafro in the Turabdin was postponed after a bomb attack in June 2005.²⁹⁰

An important and still unsolved problem is church property. "Foundations" are under state control; if an abbot wants to have a church building redecorated, the government overseer has to give his consent and negotiate the matter with the authorities. At the beginning of the 1970s, Turkey started confiscating Christian foundational property. What triggered it off were the Greek-Turkish tensions because of Cyprus. Hitherto 170 non-Muslim foundations have been the victims of this yet unaltered policy. What is once confiscated remains irrevocably lost. The Syrian Christians are less affected by this than the "Lausanne minorities" (Greeks, Armenians and Jews). In Istanbul, the West Syrians own just two pieces of land via the foundation of their episcopal church Meryemana Kilisesi: on one there is the church that was erected in 1849; the second one is the adjoining plot of land. All other real estate is registered under private names, even if owned by the parish. With great foresight, immovable property bequeathed to the Church has not nominally been left to church foundations at least since the sixties.

The foundational property of the Church in the Turabdin is more strongly affected. In recent times, the Armenian Patriarchate, as well as the Syrian-Orthodox community, has launched initiatives toward a change of the law concerning foundations. Some Syrian-Orthodox

289 Barbara Coudenhove-Kalergi: Die Türkei lesen, in: Der Standard, 5.9.2005, 23.

290 Neue Züricher Zeitung, nr. 213 v. 14.6.2005, 6.

parishioners drafted a bill and sent it to twenty delegates in Ankara. The object is to abolish the 1935 law and to newly regulate the acquisition of property by non-Muslim foundations. The draft suggests introducing the possibility of incorporating old foundations into new ones and to grant them the right of accepting property. Simultaneously, the parish representatives argue that the current foundation law will have to be amended within the framework of EU-harmonization. On the basis of proposals made by the Armenian patriarchate, the parliament has presented a first bill of its own. The issue is also discussed in the Turkish media. Many people argue in favour of an improvement of the foundations' situation. The deputy chairman of the conservative "Party of the Right Way" (DYP), Hasan Ekinci, however, raised the objection that the Christian minorities were a threat to national security. Therefore, they should not enjoy the same rights as Muslim Turks.

Nowadays, Turkey must at least expect to meet with resistance. Thus, in summer 2005, a Turkish party leader was temporarily arrested in Switzerland for "denying the genocide", which is a punishable offence under Swiss law. In 2005, EU expansion commissioner Olli Rehn attested to Turkey that there was no genuine religious freedom there. The 3SAT documentary "Christians in Turkey" has taken up the subject. Until now, 24 states - France, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands among them - have condemned the genocide; the USA and Israel, however, have not. In a committee meeting of the Austrian National Council on March 15, 2002, the Greens introduced a motion to condemn the massacres of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1917. The motion was debated, but - due to interventions by Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, who emphasised the priority of Austrian economic interests - was not agreed by the government

majority of the ÖVP (Conservative Austrian People's Party) and FPÖ (Freedom Party). When the German province of Brandenburg ordered to make mention of the massacres within the frame of the curriculum of history, this caused sharp protests by Turkish Ambassador Irtemcelik. The Armenia Conference of internationally reputed Turkish scientists from May 25 to 27, 2005, was suppressed by Turkish Minister of Justice Cemil Cicek and slandered as "a dagger thrust into the back of the Turkish nation". On the 90th anniversary of the beginning of Armenian deportations, the German Bundestag - on the motion of the SPD, CDU-CSU, Bündnis 90/Greens and FDP fractions - passed a resolution referring to the efforts of Johannes Lepsius and - in view of the more than one million victims of murder - obliged Germany to contribute to the reconciliation between Turks and Armenians. This was a first tentative step toward coming to terms with the past.

"Historiography in Turkey concerning the Armenian question is almost exclusively reserved to authors that defend the Ottoman-Turkish state and often work on governmental order. Some seem to see no incongruity with other objects like promoting peace, understanding among nations or searching for truth. Scientists straying from the ways of "...official historiography obviously do not want to burn their fingers in this issue."²⁹¹ Still, German thinker Friedrich Paulsen's warning "Who prevents enlightenment up will be doubly hit" is valid for Turkey, too. Europe is based on the achievements of the French Revolution, liberty and equality, brotherliness and the primacy of reason and objective science. The era of national hatred and racist megalomania is over in Europe. All nations have to deal with and reflect on the crimes of their history. Patriarch Bartholomaios, the head of 300 million Orthodox Christians, has invited Pope Benedict XVI

291 Verheij (1999), 92.

to the celebration of Orthodoxy; the Turkish government wants to prevent this, because it does not recognize the patriarch as the head of Orthodoxy, but only as the supreme pastor of the Greek minority of Istanbul, which has shrunk to 3,000 members.²⁹² It seems strange that only on September 23, 2005 a Turkish administrative court prohibited a conference on the Armenian issue in Istanbul, at which historians like Halil Berkay and Taner Akcam wanted to present their views on the genocide, which are not in line with state doctrine. Already in May 2005 the conference had been prevented by Turkish Minister of Justice Cemil Cicek, who insulted the scientists as "traitors". The EU-commission rightly called this a provocation.²⁹³ When, eventually the conference could be held at the Bilgi University instead of the Bogazici and the Sabanci universities, this did not mean a solution to the problem. Formal tricks cannot resolve such questions. Negotiations on Turkey's entry into the EU began on October 3, 2005. It is to be hoped that European countries will not only submit to economic and military usefulness, but also demand Turkey to occupy itself with the massacres of Armenian, Greek and Syrian Christians. Among the values indispensable to Europe are unrestricted freedom of religion, assembly and opinion, legalization of schools of all kinds and financial support of them, opening of all archives for international research, returning of stolen and protection of ecclesiastical cultural assets (embodiment in the real estate register, right of possession of sacred paraphernalia, manuscripts and libraries) and a comprehensive protection of minorities. The open discourse between Europe and Turkey can start.

292 Neue Züricher Zeitung, Nr. 217 v. 17./18.9.2005, 3.

293 Neue Züricher Zeitung, Nr. 223 v. 24./25.9.2005, 3.

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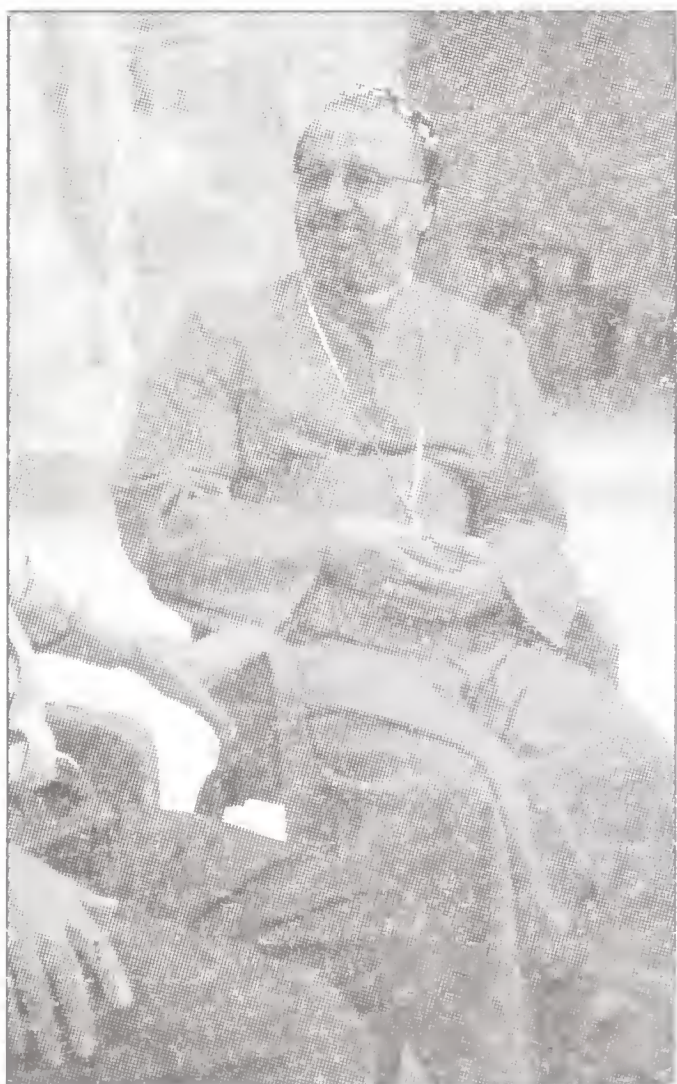
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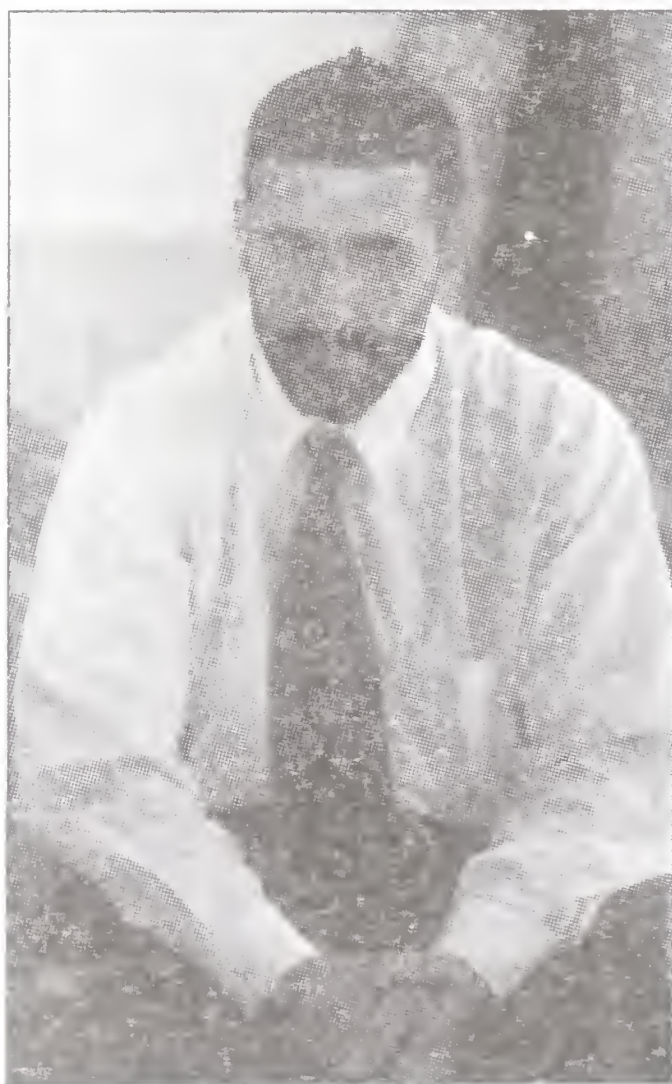
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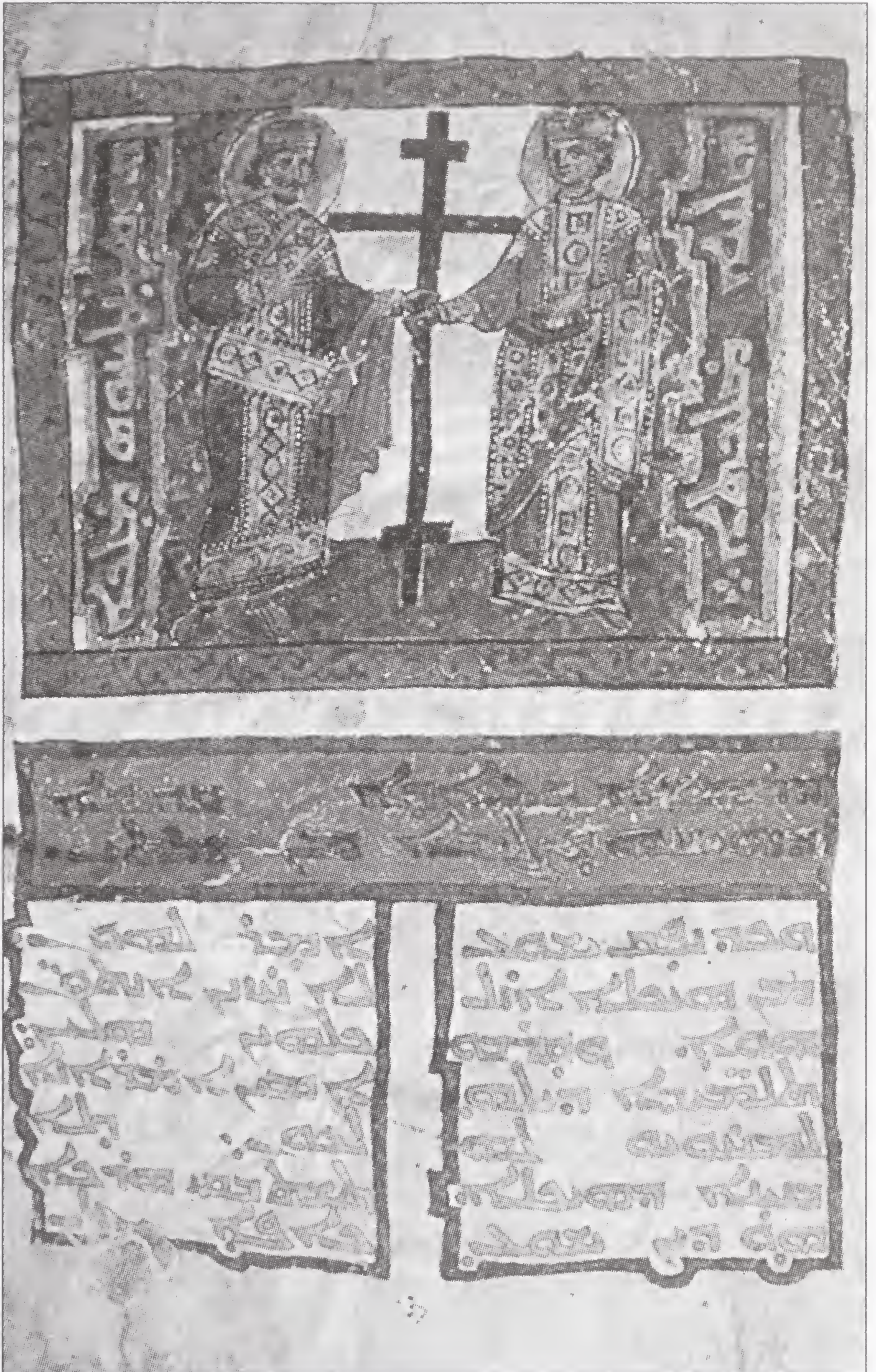
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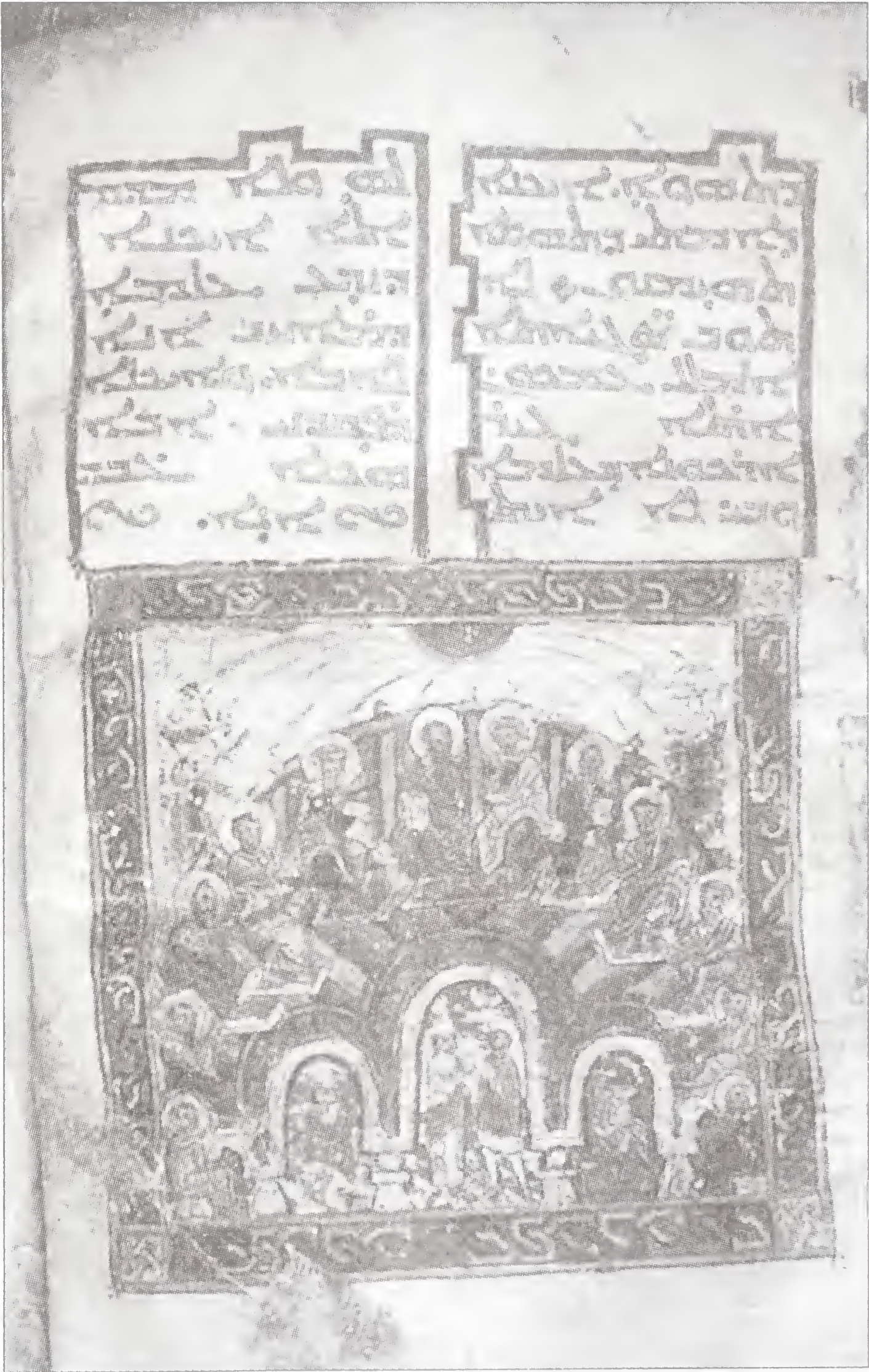
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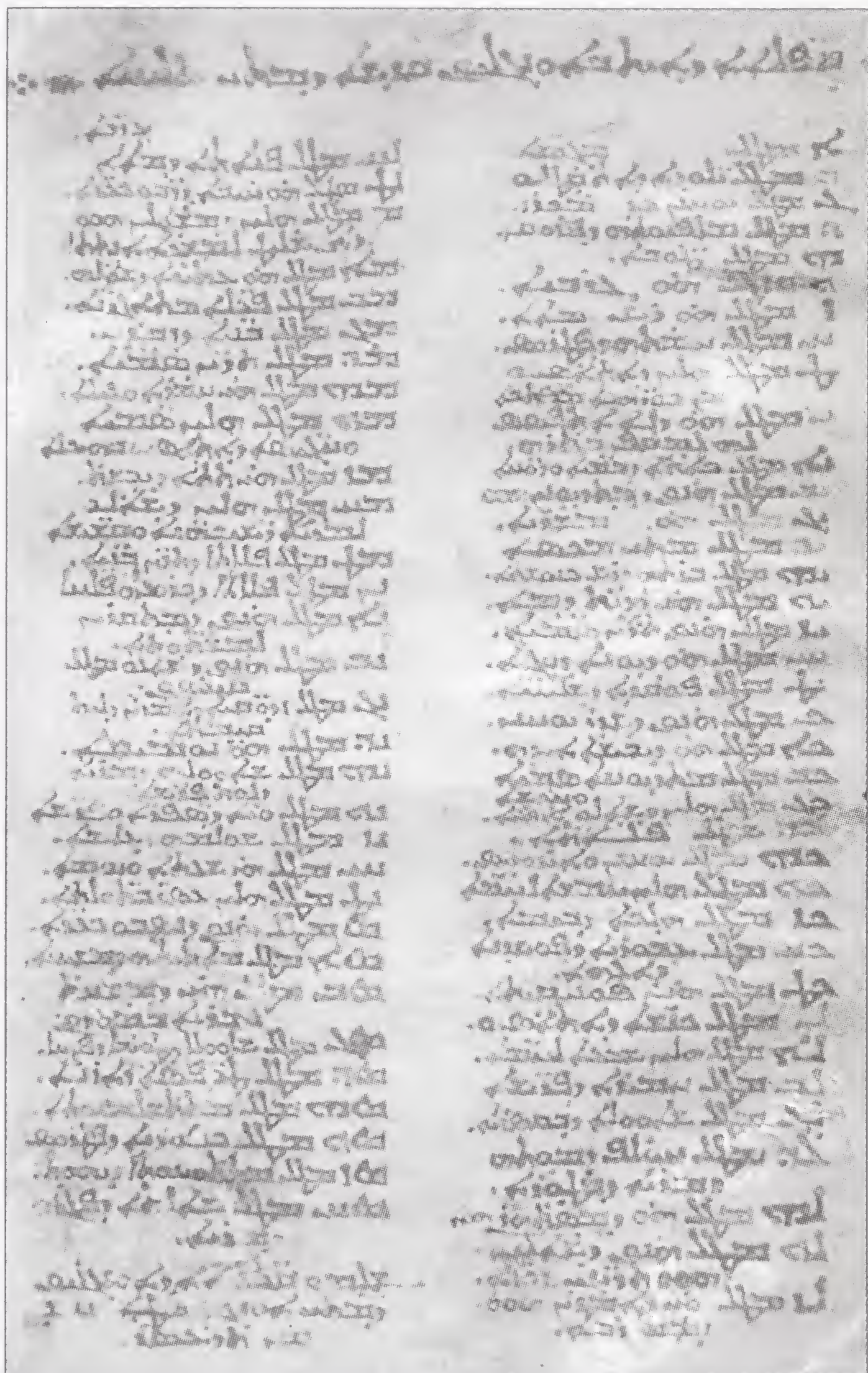
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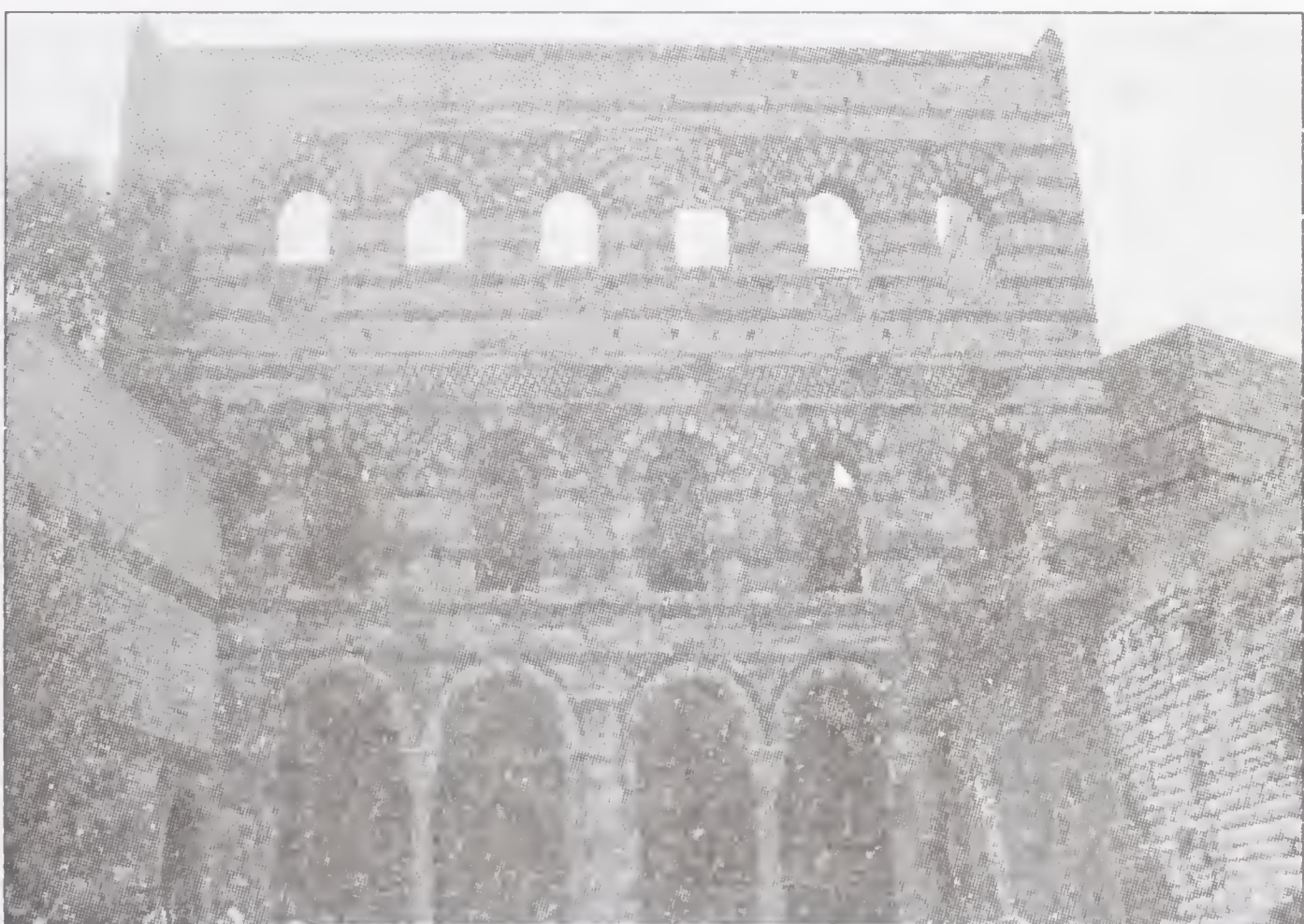
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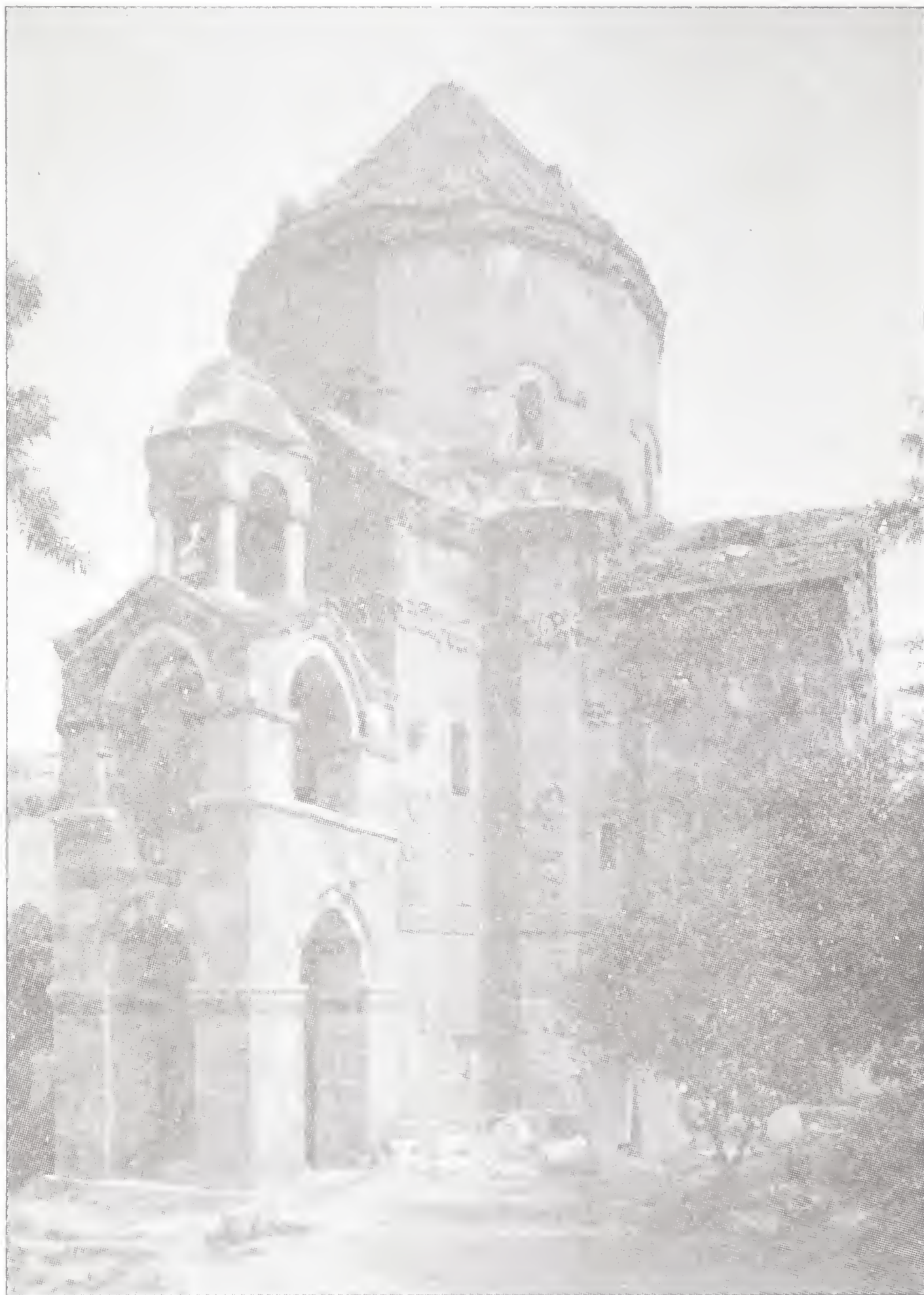
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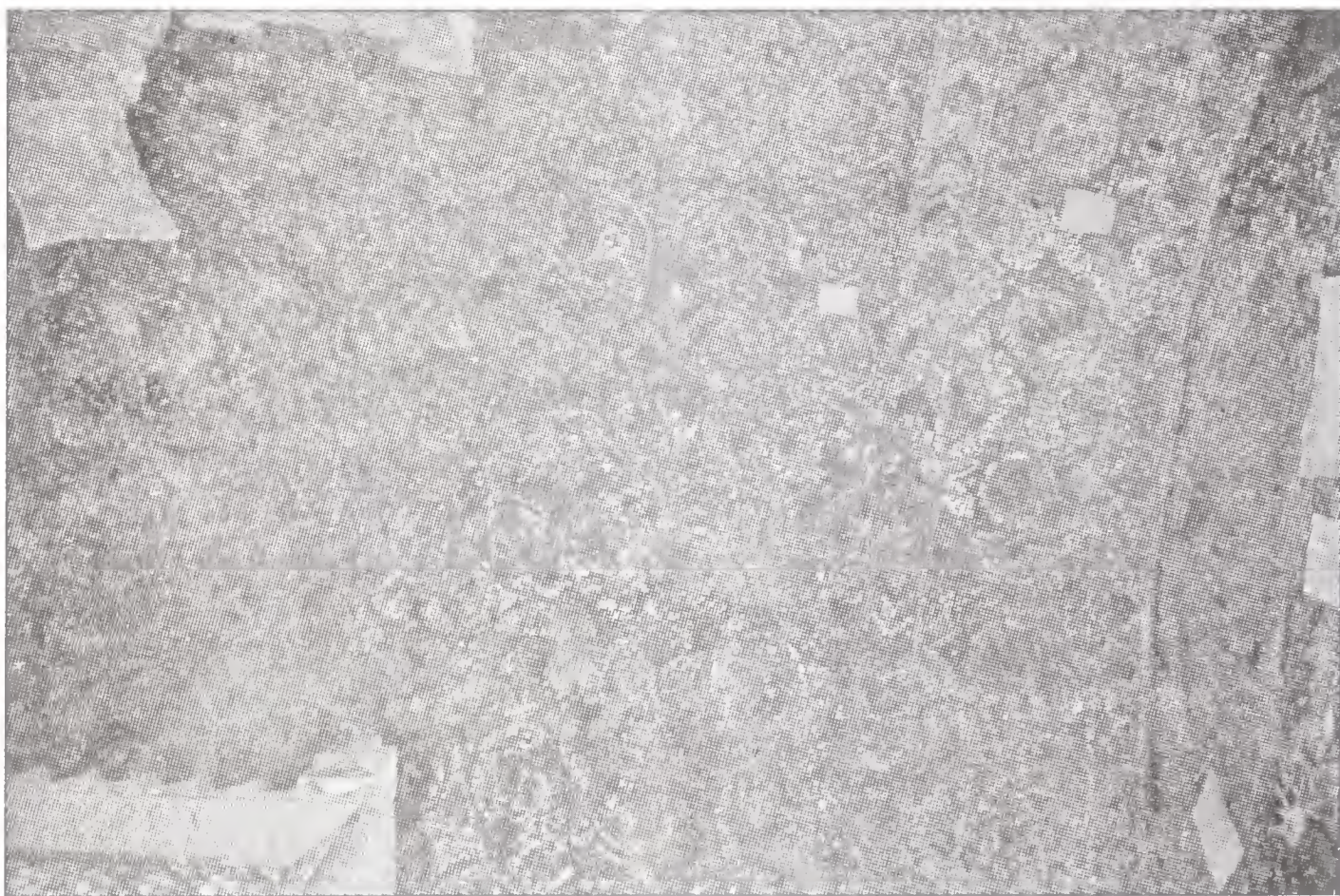
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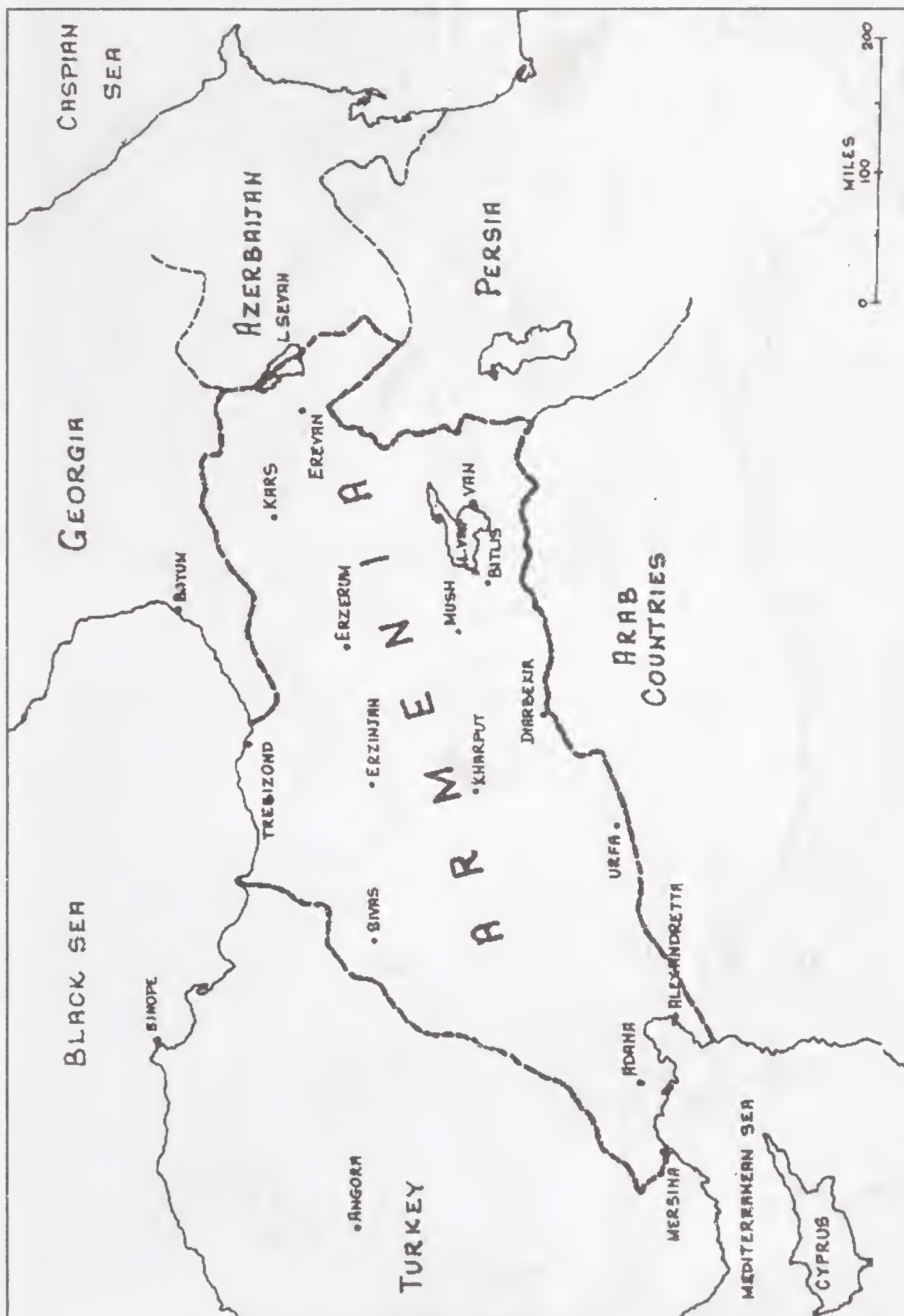
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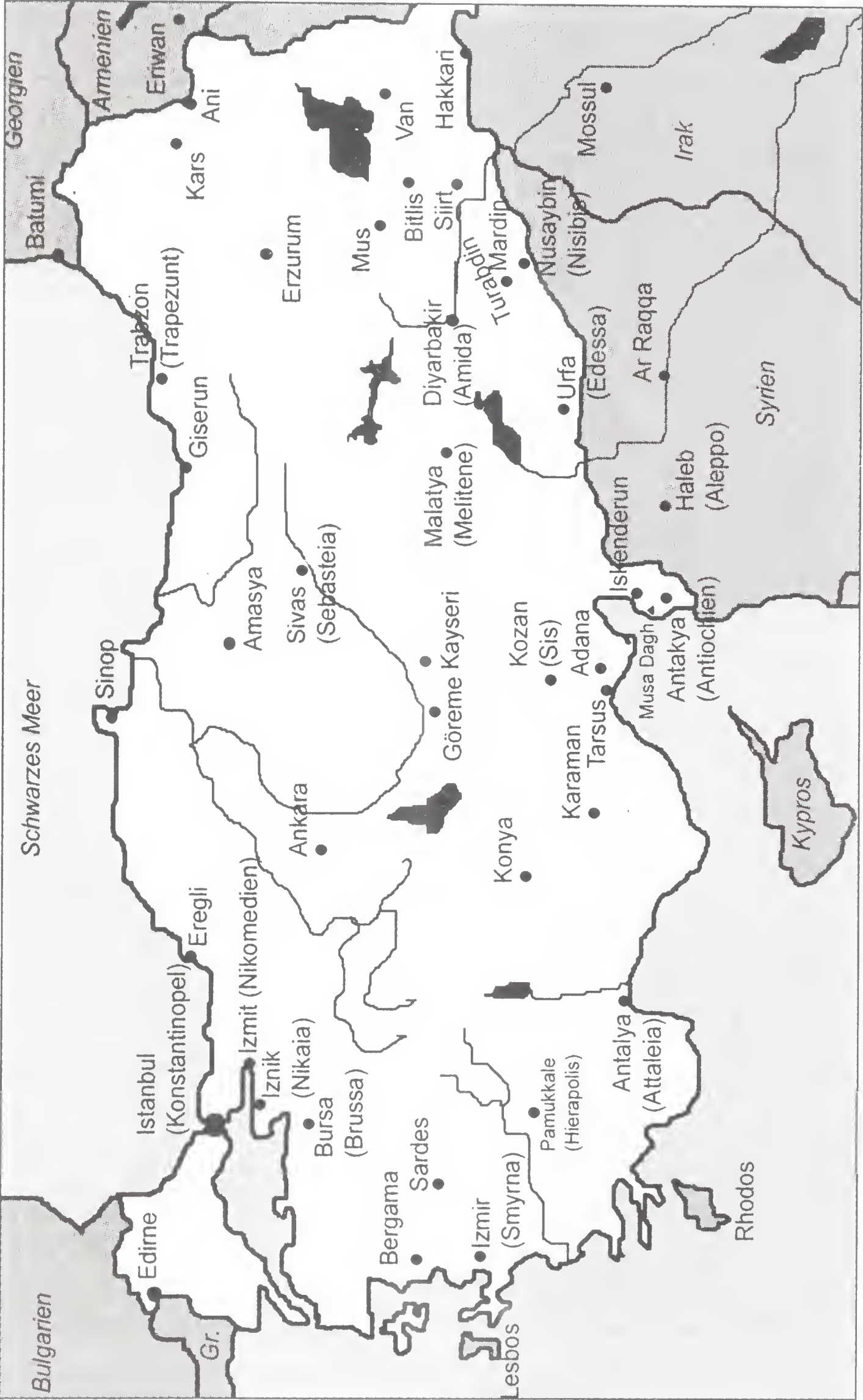
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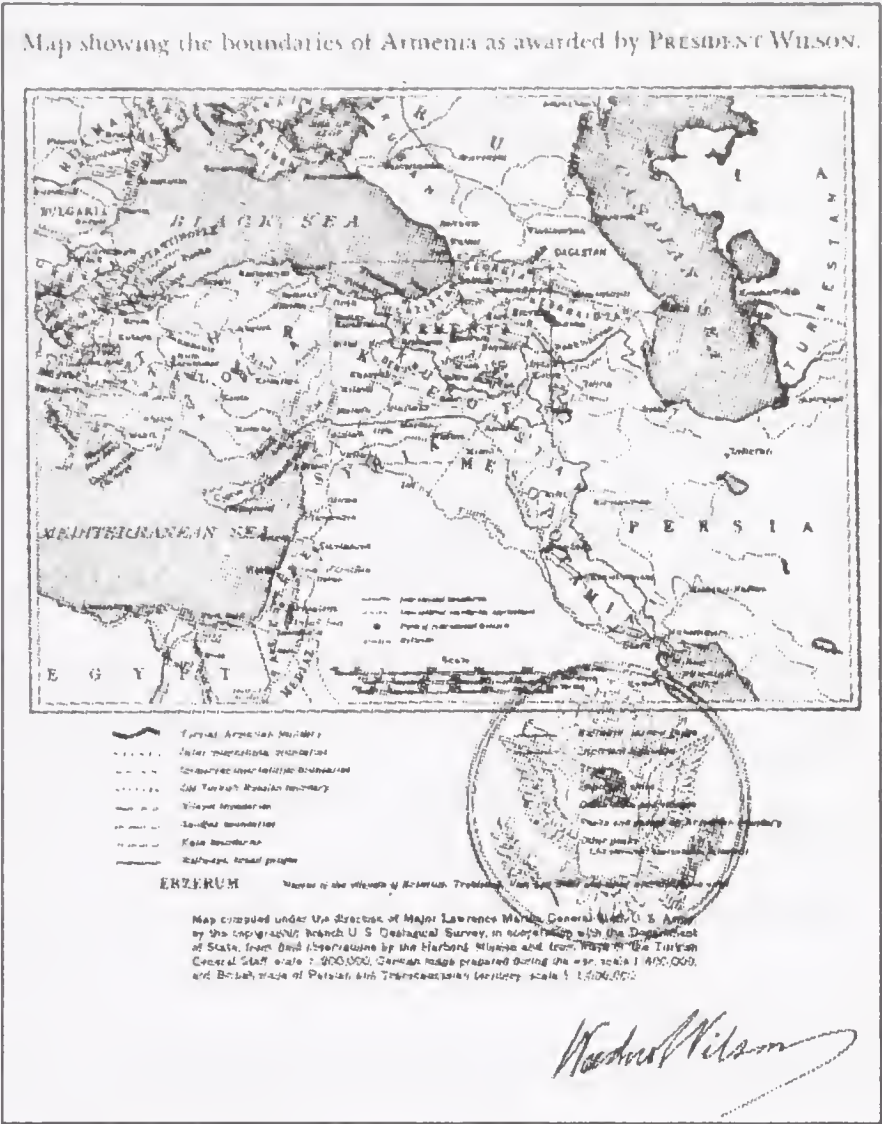
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Prof. DDr. Wilhelm Baum was born on 30.1.1948 in Düsseldorf, Germany. He hails from a Catholic family. His education up to *Abitur* (1967) was in St. Hermann Joseph College Steinfeld. His University studies of History, Philosophy, Germanistik and Theology were at Innsbruck, Rome, Mainz, Münster and Tübingen. He had the privilege of having done his studies under Professors like Joseph Lortz, J.B. Metz, E. Iserloh, Ernst Bloch, Hans Küng etc. He took his doctorate degree in Philosophy from the Innsbruck University in 1971 and his doctorate in Theology from the Graz University in 1999, after having done his research on "The Transformation of the Myth of Prester John. Rom, Byzanz and the Christians at the Orient in Middle Age". He successfully completed his *Habilitation* in 1994 at the University of Klagenfurt specialising in the Medieval History. He worked as Lecturer and guest Prof. of Medieval History in the Univ. of Graz, Austria.

Books:

1. "The Church of the East" (2000 with Dietmar Winkler, English 2001 London)
2. "Schirin" (Klagenfurt 2003)
3. "Enea Silvio Piccolomini Pius II: Cosmography of Asia"(Ed.) (Klagenfurt 2005)
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Articles:

Published many articles about the "Church of the East", the "Syrian Orthodox Church", Georgia at the "Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon" (www.bautz.de) at Internet and the Lexicon "Religion in history and present"

Now he is working at book "History of the Western Syrian (Jacobite) Church" from the six century until today."

He was a member at some conferences about Eastern Christianity and Medieval History.